vol. 1
crippled library

Virgins & Vampires

JEAN ROLLIN

Essays by
Jean Rollin

Edited by
Peter Blumenstock

Contains Soundtrack CD
THE TWO VAMPIRE ORPHANS
Music by Philippe d'Aram

Contents

Introduction.....04
Le Viol du Vampire.....08
La Vampire Nue.....18
Le Frisson des Vampires.....30
Requiem pour un Vampire.....40
La Rose de Fer.....48
Les Demoniaques.....56
Lèvres de Sang.....64
Phantasmes.....70
Les Raisins de la Mort.....78
Fascination.....86
La Nuit des Traquées.....92
Les Echappées.....96
La Morte Vivante.....100
Le Trottoirs de Bangkok.....108
Perdues dans New York.....116
Killing Car.....120
Les Deux Orphelines Vampires...126
Artwork.....134
Behind the Scenes.....138
Interview with Jean Rollin.....144
Filmography.....152

Copyright © 1997 Crippled Publishing, a division of Crippled Dick Hot Wax/Germany & Lucertola Media/Germany.

Book design & concept by Peter Blumenstock.
Production assistants: Toner Van Bach, Michael Krell.
Translations: Sigrun Wolff Saphire.
Front cover: LE FRISSON DES VAMPIRES, back: LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE,

All photos and artwork are © copyright LES FILMS ABC, Jean Rollin/Paris.
Photos of KILLING CAR and LES DEUX ORPHELINES VAMPIRES are property of Véronique Djaouti.

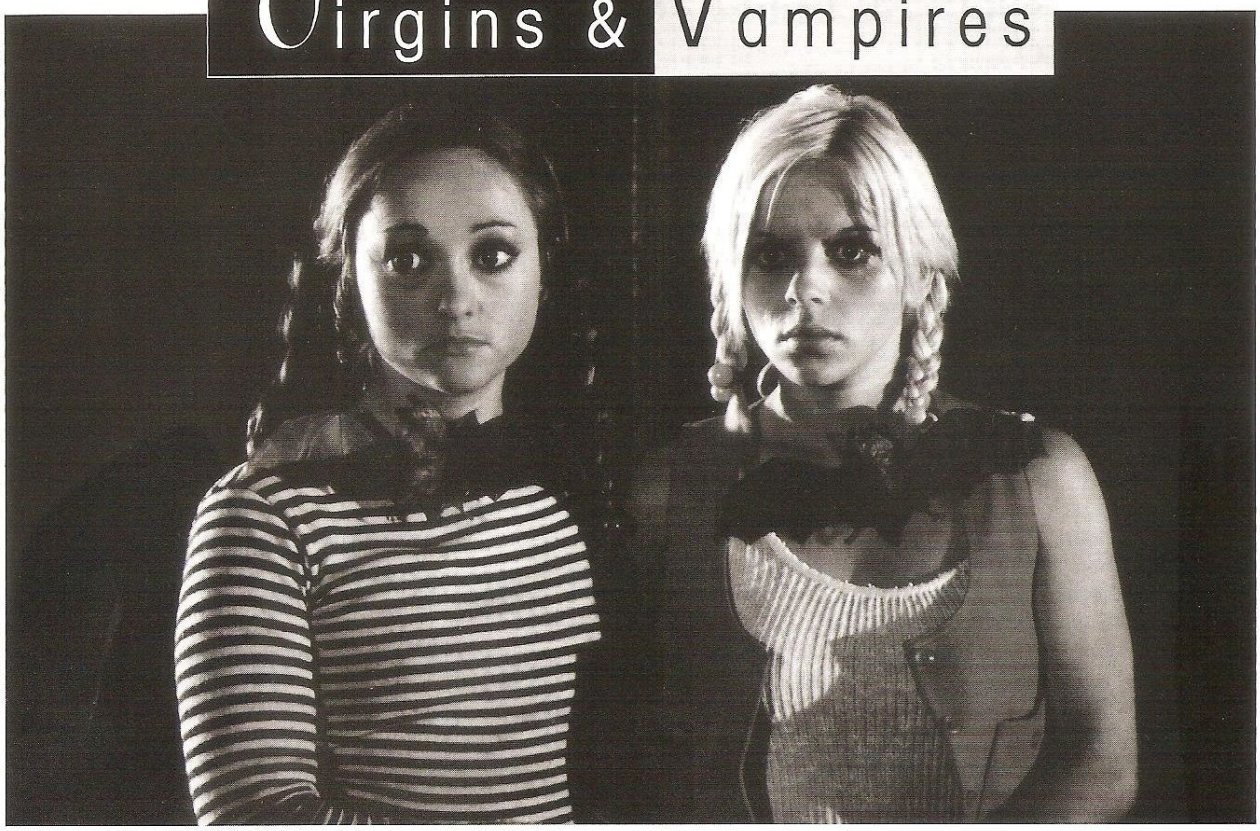
All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by an electronic or mechanical means, including information storage or retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages.

Thanks to Jean Rollin, Philippe d'Aram, Lionel Wallmann, Ars Antigua de Paris, Sigrun Wolff Saphire, Fir Suidema, Natalie Perrey, Christian Kessler, Nina Gültzow (for patience), Graf Haufen, Marc Morris, Tim Lucas, Craig Ledbetter, Mike Lebbing, David Saphire.

First published in June 1997
5 4 3 2 1

Visit the Crippled Dick Hot Wax world wide web site: http://www.crippled.com

Virgins & Vampires



Essays by
Jean Rollin

Edited by
Peter Blumenstock

crippled library

Magic Little Girls in Fetish Land

One's first encounter with the cinema of Jean Rollin is in most cases a memorable experience. You either love or hate what you see; are bewitched or bewildered, fascinated or utterly irritated. Some people compare his films to the paintings of Max Ernst or Clouvis Trouille, and his talent as a writer to Stirner, Marx and Boby Lapointe; others consider him to be nothing more than boring and pretentious with no sense of rhythym and structure. I will never forget the day when I saw, by pure accident, my first film directed by Jean Rollin. It was LA ROSE DE FER, one of his most personal and uncommercial films, deeply rooted in the traditions of classical french fantasy. Many others followed, and although most of them clearly dealt with themes and motives of exploitation cinema, it was obvious that there was much more to them—something way beyond the limitations of drive-in fare and the like. Just as Rollin himself describes his experience with French literate Eric Losfeld in the interview later on in this book, I myself had found something I felt at home with, something that spoke clearly to my soul. Rollin is a phenomenon in the world of cinema. Now more than ever in the 90s, dominated by major productions and superficial plastic films from the shores of cynical Hollywood entertainment factories. Over the years, Rollin became one of my favorite filmmakers. I laughed with his characters, cried at his emotional impact, wondered about his incapability to overcome some of his stylistic and budgetary limitations, but, above all, I was deeply in love with those strange, bizarre images and emotions that I never managed to describe properly to someone who couldn't respond to his films.

It is indeed a truly difficult affair to put on paper what distinguishes Rollin's films from the majority of other films dealing with erotic frissons.

While refined eroticism and fetish-imagery are a steady companion to his œuvre, it is his unique worldview that shines through between the frames of pulp-inspired vampire and horror fables.

During a lengthy conversation about Rollin, the British writer Pete Tombs dropped a line which stuck in my mind as the perfect description of Rollin's artistry. He said Rollin was not a filmmaker in the common sense, concerned with the regulations of logical American storytelling and therefore common cinema language of the 90s in general. He was a phantasist, creating images to which he imagined so much more, and, of course, he expected his audience to imagine and dream with him. If there is an empty field with two clowns slowly walking over it, Rollin starts the dialogue with his audience, and if they are willing to respond, it is a journey into the most unique universe that fantastic cinema has to offer.

Born November 3. 1938 in Paris, Rollin was attracted to art from an early age thanks to his father, who worked as an actor and, every once in a while, took young Jean to his performances. This, and the adventure novels of Jules Verne, the American serials of JUNGLE JIM, ZORRO and the like which, back then, still played in theaters, made a profound impression on him. Rollin knew that he wanted to make films, yet he very soon realized that he had special taste, attitude and approach.

Rollin likes to describe his work as "marginal;" weird little films shot on a shoestring budget which, due the the heavy nudity content, gathered the attention of voyeurs in sidestreet cinemas rather than the appreciation of the audience they deserved. Rollin is an outsider of the most extreme kind.

His first feature film came after several shorts and failed attempts to make a feature. It was produced with the help of an American, Sam Selsky, who was living in Paris and needed a film to combine with an American horror flick that was too short to play alone. The 1968 LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE was obviously a work of its time and although it betrays the atmosphere of rebellion and delirious ideas of the `68 period, it wasn't accepted by the very same people who claimed to be progressive. While stones and bottles were thrown at the police force on the streets of Paris in the summer of 68, the same was happening in the aisles of the premiere theater where LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE had just been shown, the end titles accompanied by boos from the audience who had not already fled from this cinematic "scandal."

The strange visual style, the surreal atmosphere and the disturbing Free-Jazz score by François Tusques had nothing in common with the vampire tales of Hammer that the audience expected to see in this, the "first French vampire film."

Rollin and his work became infamous to the extent where the reputation of LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE alone made money for it, and it actually became a financial success at the box office. People came to see with their own eyes what had upset so many others, and Rollin, baffled by a reaction he had never anticipated while shooting, was capable of going on. With LA VAMPIRE NUE, his first color film—

containing some exceptionally beautiful images thanks to director of photography Jean-Jacques Renon and one of Rollin's most beautiful scripts—he tried to make something along the lines of a Hammer film: a cool, traditional vampire flick. Still not sure of his position and stylistic roots in the cinema circus, Rollin relied on his concept of improvisation and, fortunately, failed to achieve his goal, but instead created a timeless, romantic piece of fantastic cinema which, for the first time, established the basic elements of his subsequent work. A tragic, brave vampire girl in a world she doesn't belong in, the yearning for a better, freer world, twins, the evil bourgeoisie and a strong visual handwriting that pays homage to Georges Franju, Murnau and Lang.

Rollin continued to make "his" films with his production company "Les Films ABC." From the episode-like REQUIEM POUR UN VAMPIRE, in which bankrobber-girls in clown costumes hide in an old castle, to his tribute to the serials of the 20s, LES DEMONIAQUES, in which two girls killed by shipwreckers take their revenge. From the autobiographic LEVRES DE SANG, in which a man remembers his childhood encounter with a vampire-girl, to LES RAISINS DE LA MORT, a blood spattered tale in which the population of the deserted French mountain region Cévennes are turning into toxic undead monsters, haunting the last living people. From the Countess Bathory inspired FASCINATION, with Brigitte Lahaie giving a legendary performance as La Mort Avec Sa Faux ("The Death with its Scythe"), to the claustrophobic LA NUIT DES TRAQUEES.
From the blood-drenched tale of eternal friendship that goes beyond death, LA MORTE VIVANTE, to the new age PERDUES DANS NEW YORK, which Rollin made as a sort of testament at a time when he was confronted with a serious illness.
But no matter how hard the compromises he had to make—giving in to budgetary limitations, working with amateur actors, making a living in the porn business in the mid 70s or emphasising the gore aspect during the trend of ultra-violent horror in the late 70s—he never managed to completely abandon his style and themes, even if he wanted to. Rollin couldn't direct an action film or a comedy. His personality wouldn't allow him to succeed in these genres. As with EMANUELLE 6, originally directed by Bruno Zincone, who couldn't finish the film and was eventually replaced by Rollin to save what could be saved, the resulting films are somewhat clumsy and their visualisation strangely out of sync with the subject they are dealing with.

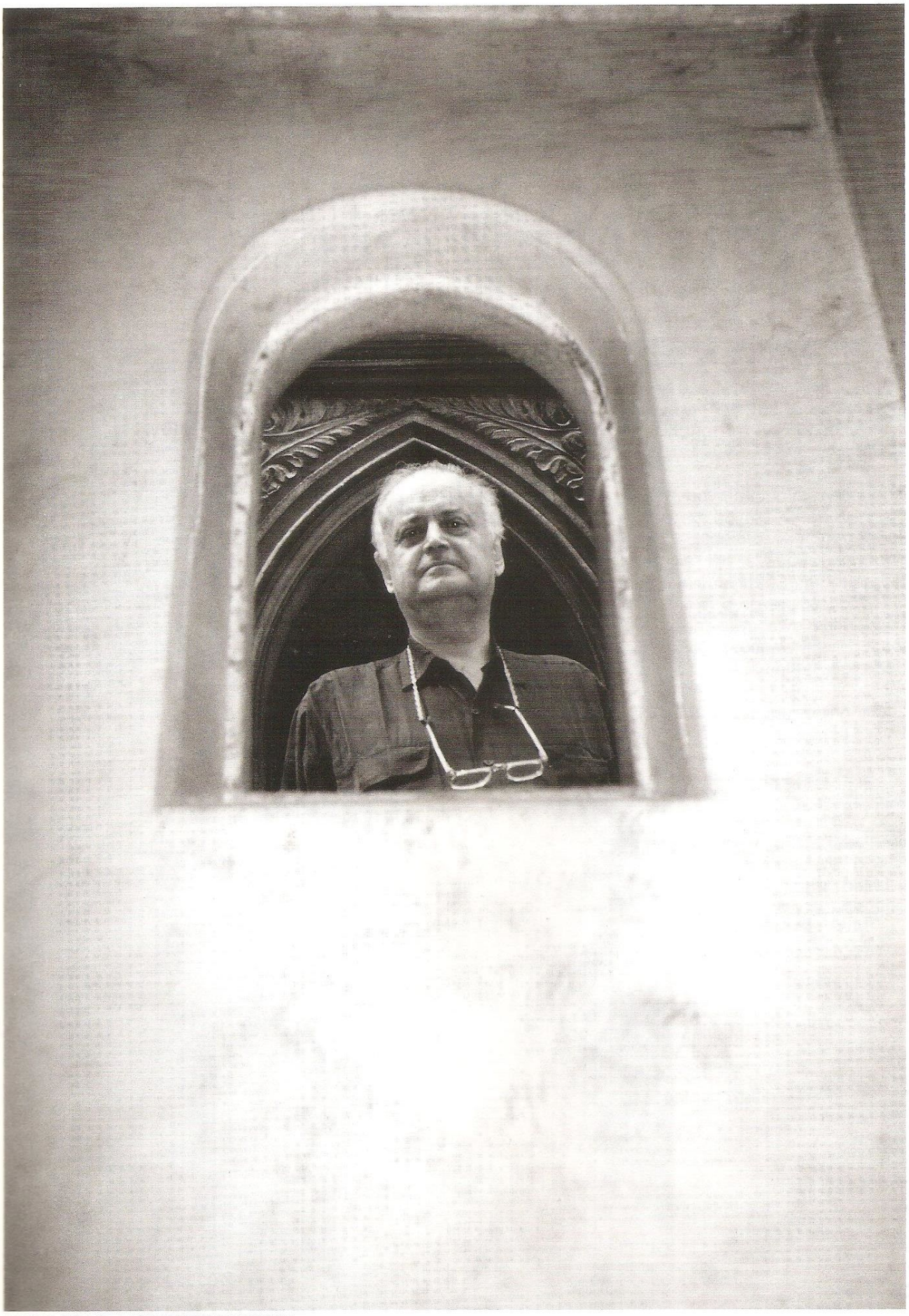
It's the mixture of ingredients that define the "Rollinade," a term invented by French critics to describe his style in the early 70s. His love for the aesthetics and cheesy cliffhanger mentality of American pulp culture—the serials of the 20s with damsels in distress, evil supervillains such as Fu-Manchu—blending the profound and etheral tradition of the French fantastique with an almost avantgarde-like visual style that has no comparison. Rollin's films are extremely slow, referring to sets and objects as if they were sculptures that deserve the utmost attention of the camera in order to transform them into a landscape of another planet. Railroads, woods, old, abandoned chateaus, the beach at Dieppe—his favourite location—and cemeteries are put on celluloid as if they were a lost paradise of the dead, full of romanticism and whispers telling of long forgotten stories. There is a strange female sensibility in his view of things and appreciation of emotions—one of the reasons why, in most cases, two little girls on the verge of adulthood are his favourite protagonists. Their conquest of the world in which laws, regulations, repression of female sexuality and moral standards of the bourgeoisie no longer exist, transform Rollin into a truly subversive artist.
Unlike those magic little girls of the human race, Rollin's vampires are beyond this lust for ultimate liberation. Their metamorphosis is already complete. These are no dark monsters following their evil instincts, rather messengers from a better, freer world where death is only a beginning. Their hunters are not heroes, but philistine citizens in defense of the "old order," lacking all imagination and the tolerance of otherness—a type which Rollin seems to hate so much.
And although his films obviously display a strong interest in the sexual aspect of becoming a creature beyond the restrictions of society, I am convinced that he, along with Italian director Dario Argento, might be one of the few male filmmakers who is capable of infusing his works with a certain female spirit which sets them worlds apart from other genre pieces.
His "Two Vampire Orphans," the title heroines of his most recent film (and bloodthirsty protagonists of his series of books published by Fleuve Noir in France), are perfect examples of this view. While they are blind, innocent

orphans by day, beloved by their mother superior at a restrictive orphanage in France, they become seeing vampire girls hunting down their prey at night.
The latter film, the director's most ambitious and expensive project to date, that perfectly displays the evolution his "two girls" have undergone over the decades since his first feature film, LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE.

Rollin, now suffering for several years from a serious kidney problem which hinders his every day life to an enormous extent, has found a refuge in his books and tales. And when the two upright looking little girls open their plaits—bound so tight during the day to please the nuns—to let their long manes fly wild in the mild summer wind like predators, Rollin joins the journey of his orphans with whom he is madly in love, not knowing where the adventure will take the three of them. From the very beginning of his career, the concept of improvisation played an important part. He wrote or filmed, with ideas from his unconsious, ready to accept the surprise of things to come. This enthusiasm for new things, never falling back on the old and common, is one of the most uplifting experiences when seeing Rollin at work. During the shooting of "The Two Vampire Orphans," one could appreciate a man who made his dream of cinema come true, in spite of seizures and obvious pain from his illness. And yet, for those four weeks of hazardous shooting near Paris, I felt at home and at ease with people I could relate to and be friends with.
With the increasing decline of European cinema, Rollin has certainly been one of the first in line to suffer from the hardship, finding it more and more difficult to raise money for his little productions. With screenplays and ideas piling up on his shelves, he eventually turned to his other obsession, writing, and transformed the scripts of BESTIALITÈ, LE DEMOISELLE DANS L'ETRAGE or LA PETITE OGRESSE into even more daring paperbacks for French publisher Fleuve Noir.

The reason for this book is a simple one. I wanted to create a fetish for those who are as much in love with Rollin's films as I am, giving him and his films the presentation they always deserved but hardly received. Its genesis became an obsession, searching through thousands of negatives, running from one photo lab to the other and spending endless nights in front of the computer to polish away dust and scratches, preparing and dreaming away. I ended up possessing more than 600 stills from LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE alone, one more beautiful than the other, and I knew I would be shedding bloody tears when the time came to select. During all this time, Jean Rollin was of great assistance, allowing me to delve deep into his private photographic memories to dig up and to exhume what nobody, sometimes not even Rollin himself, had ever seen. Forgotten negatives with images that, to me and Rollin, are often even more important than the film they were made for. They had a life of their own, and when Rollin and I went through those stills, he was often laughing, sad, melancholic, smiling or angry, but never indifferent. This is what mattered to me. Memories came back, and, hopefully, the emotions contained within those memories can be shared with the people reading these lines. He asked for a chapter where he could choose photos of people who were important to him or his career. Often, we decided to leave away some motifs, although hallmarks of the respective films and often publicized, in favor of more obscure shots, often showing Rollin and his crew at work behind the scenes. This book became a labor of love, and, as it is always the case when love is involved, it cannot and doesn't want to be perfect. I wanted it to simply be him. I loathe to describe, analyze or explain the structure and style of Rollin's cinema or his artistic intentions. This has been done over and over again—sometimes properly, sometimes with remarkable inadequacy.
Over the years, I came to the point where I found it useless—and somewhat shameless—to try to analyse a poet and his work, to rob his secrets and steal his magic by revealing the tricks. For once, I prefer to just sit back and enjoy.
This book was made to share with many others the wonder and joy one can experience with Rollin. So... open your eyes, look at the images, and hear Philippe d'Aram's dreamlike music. You might experience the Rollinade at its best.

Peter Blumenstock
May 1997



Jean Rollin 1995 on the set of LES DEUX ORPHELINES VAMPIRES.

1968

Le Viol du Vampire

The Rape of the Vampire

A first film, a first feature film, that's a little like an announcement of films to come. When I was making LE VIOL I was not quite sure that I would get the chance to make a second film. Like most beginners I packed it with as many images and ideas as possible. The result was a sort of dadaist mess, an incomprehensible serial for the majority of viewers. Because it was May '68, a time of free spirits and audacity, I believed that something this crazy would be seen in a favorable light. The reverse happened. There was a huge scandal, which hasn't been forgotten. Recently the film was shown at the Cinémathèque Française. In the audience were some of the same viewers from May '68, who still remembered the booing and whistling that punctuated the screening... After the film came out I was stunned by the hostile, even aggressive response, which followed me for years no matter what I did.

The film was made with a group of friends, each one of them bringing some idea or another to the project. Alain-Yves Beaujour, who is a novelist today, worked with me on the dialogue for the second part. He, along with my brother, played the roles of the Queen's aides. Marco Pauly pitched in some ideas for the structure, Jacqueline Sieger, the voluptuous Queen of the Vampires, designed her own costumes with the help of Philippe Druillet.

I was ecstatic during the filming of the first part. The enthusiasm that we brought to this very first film was often stifled by my complete lack of experience. In the end, it turned out to be a short film.

When we began filming the second part (called LA REINE DES VAMPIRES) two months later, we were much better organized. This made it possible for me to include many personal images, "collages," which became my trademark thereafter. Even in the first part, there was some of this quality. The duel by torch light is reminiscent of a forgotten Italian film called SOUS LE PONT DES SOUPIRS (Antonio Leonviola's SUL PONTE DEI SOSPIRI, 1952). That film always fascinated me because of the duel between two young girls in transparent night shirts. But other scenes in LE VIOL were an announcement of my films to come: the wedding on the stage of the Grand Guignol Theater with the bride in white inside a coffin; the blind woman drowning in the sea; a giant game of skittles toppled by the rising tide; the Queen with her bowls of blood; and the finale, Marco carrying the body of his dead wife down the street while reciting Gaston Leroux. All this was an announcement of my future films.

After LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE came out I thought about quitting the cinema. With one or two exceptions, the public's rejection was such that even my collaborators thought the film was lousy. Hardly anybody defended the film. But the scandal attracted attention and the film was "much talked about." This notoriety made it possible for me to get the financing for another film.

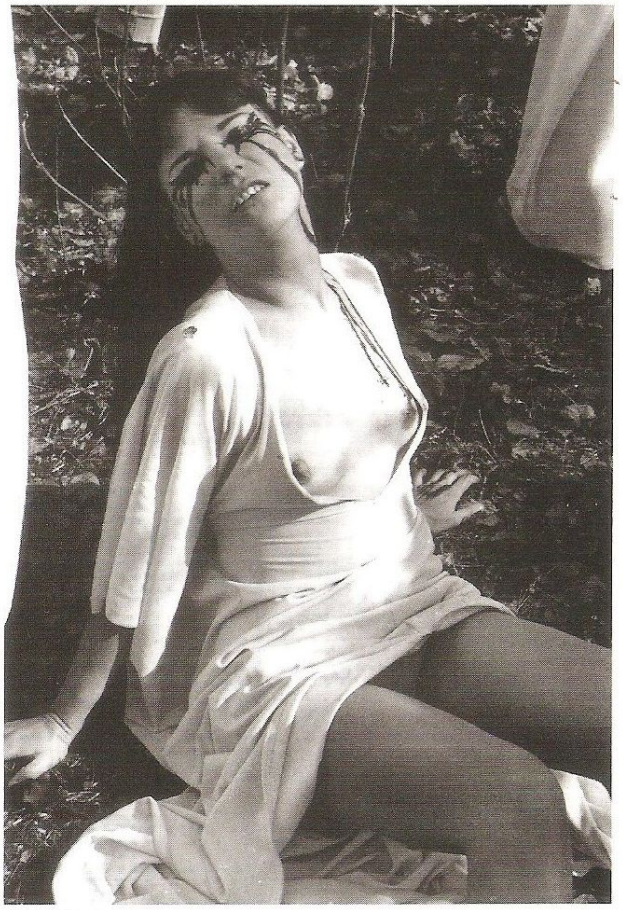
Today, LE VIOL seems to have become a minor cult film. An unforgettable experience, because even those who later distanced themselves from the film, gave their all to the production, working day and night for a pittance. I still remember that on the last day of shooting—we were in a cave close to Mount Sainte Geneviève—we didn't even have metro tickets to get home. I went home on foot, wondering what would become of this baroque and often improvised film.

The censors demanded one cut: the raising of the black host in the wedding scene. But most of the copies are complete. This is because of the General Strike that made it impossible for the labs to execute the cut.

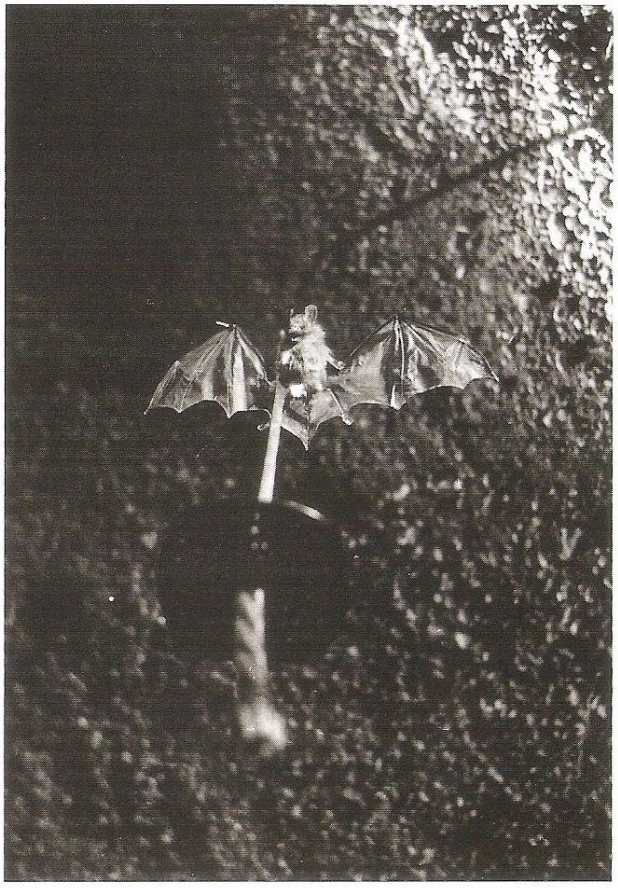
The censors also rejected Philippe Druillet's poster three times. In the end a chalice placed over the pubis of Catherine Deville was replaced with a wide belt "a la Pravda;" "Pravda la survireuse" being a comic book that was much talked about at the time. Only one photo of this first poster survives.

That was also another reason for the success of the film.

Jean Rollin

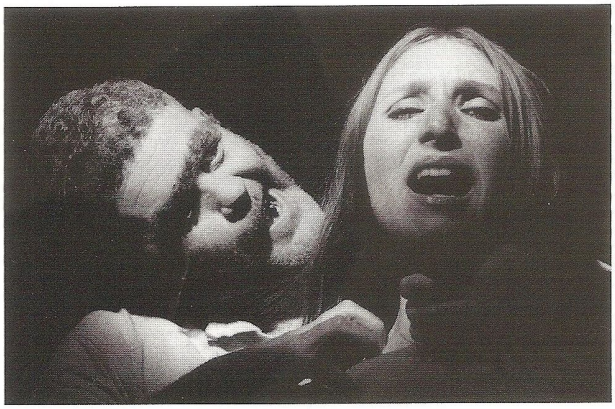


Nicole Romain

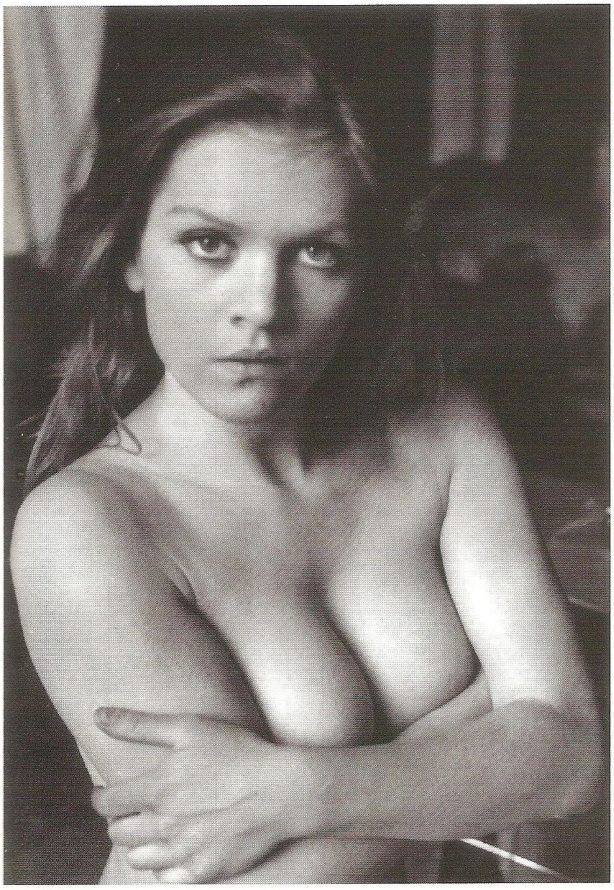


Ariane Sapriel

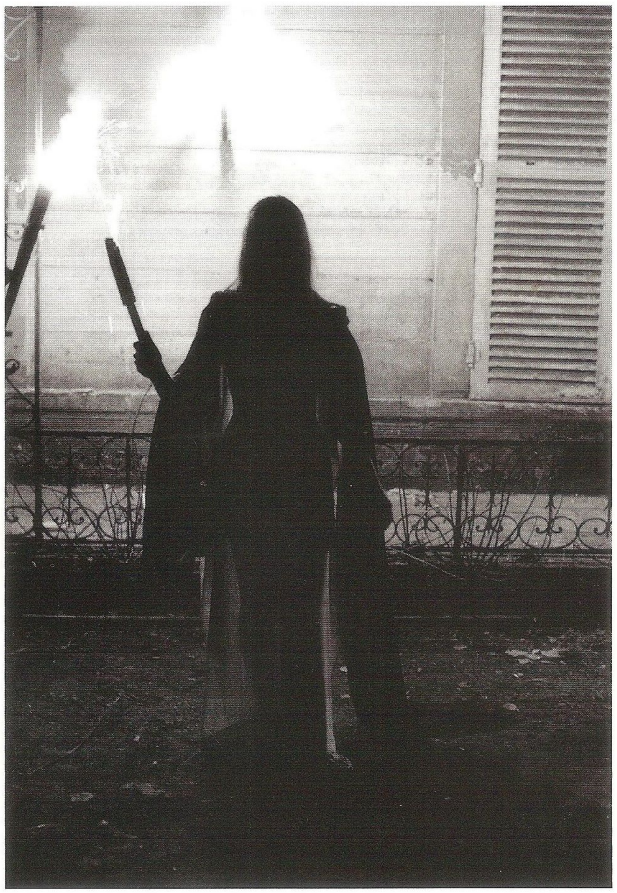
Jean Rollin (right) during one of the film's early shooting days


Don Burhans (left) & partner

Catherine Deville


Louise Horn

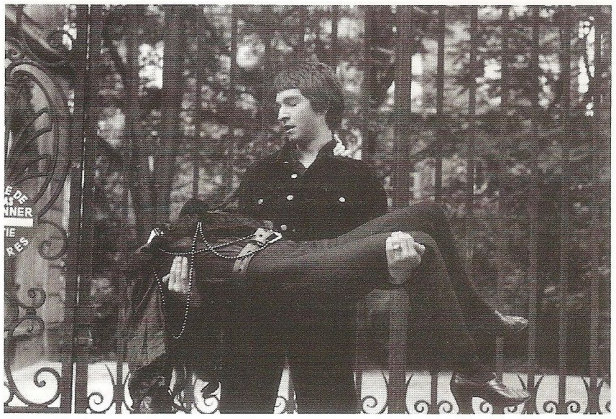
Louise Horn



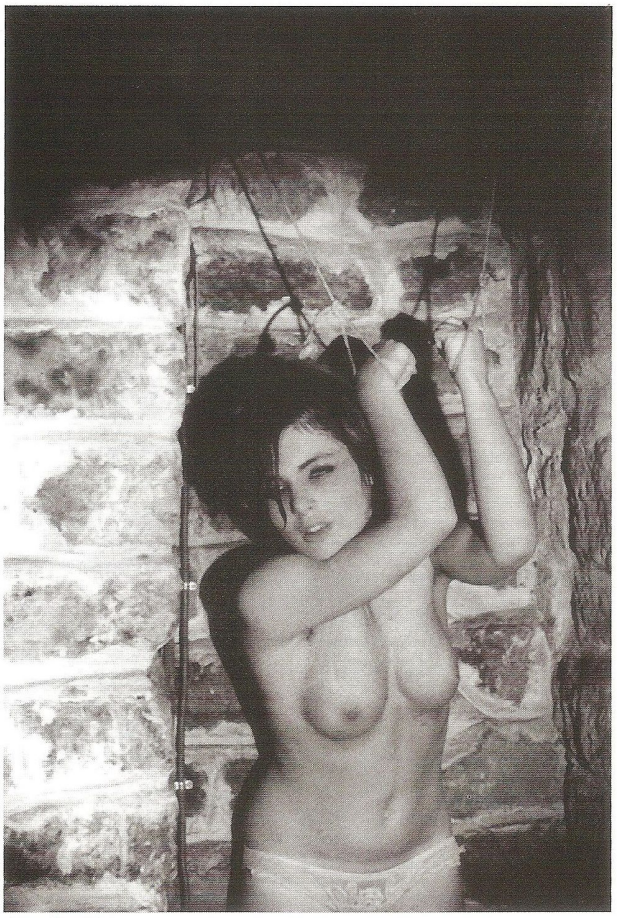
Jacqueline Sieger

Ursulle Pauly

Solange Pradel



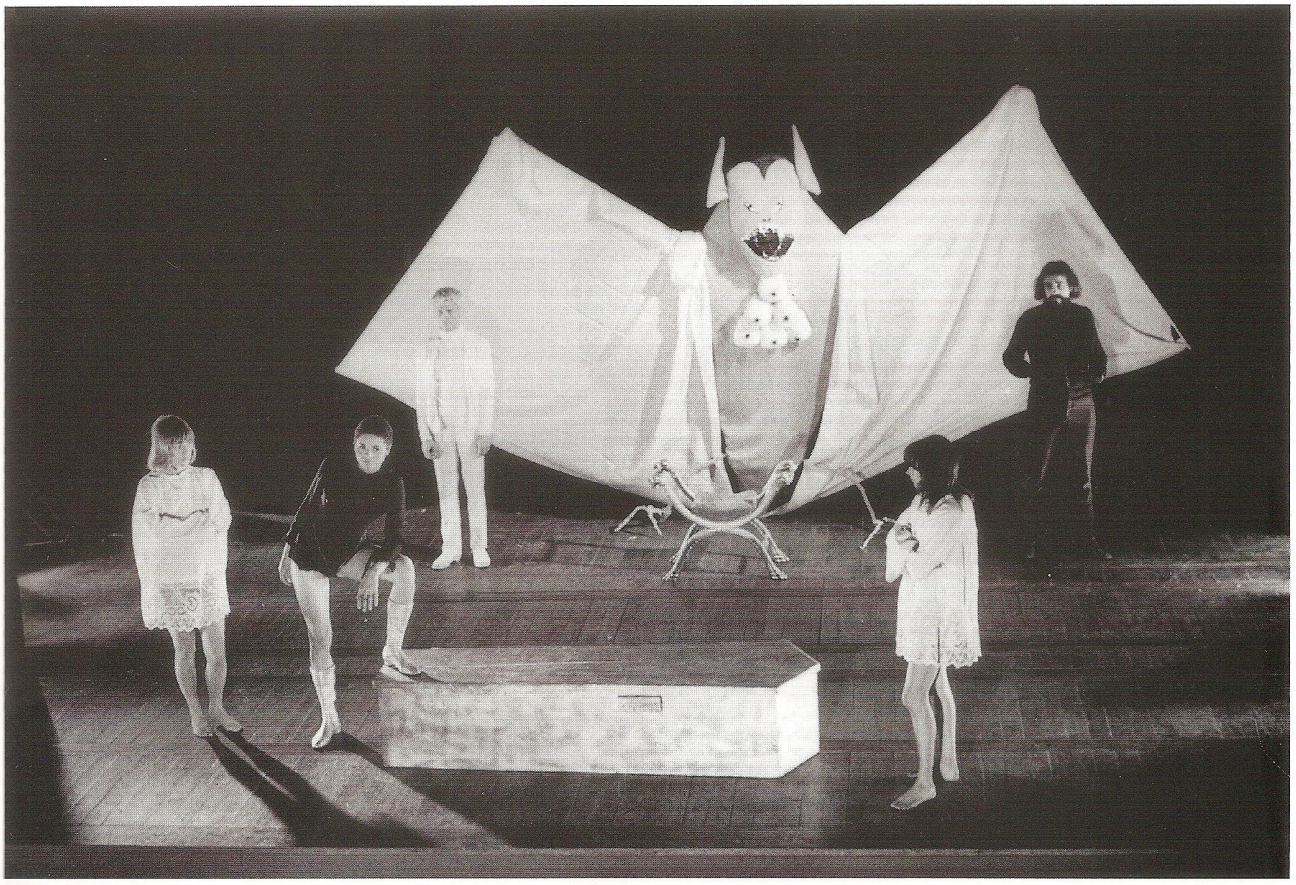
Marco Pauly



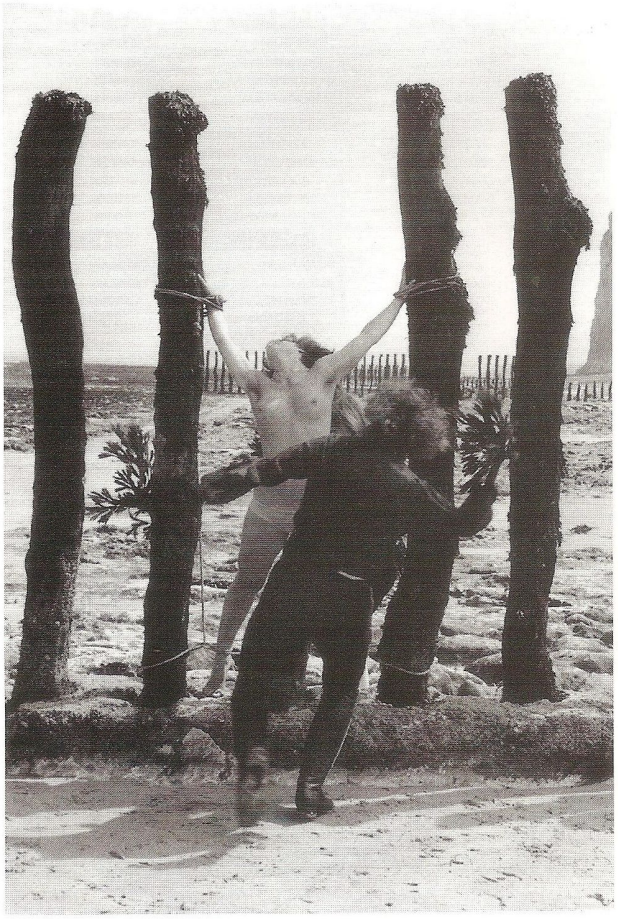
Ariane Sapriel

François Tusques, the film's music composer, and his band giving a bizarre guest appearance.

The black mass scene French censors originally intented to cut from the film's final version.



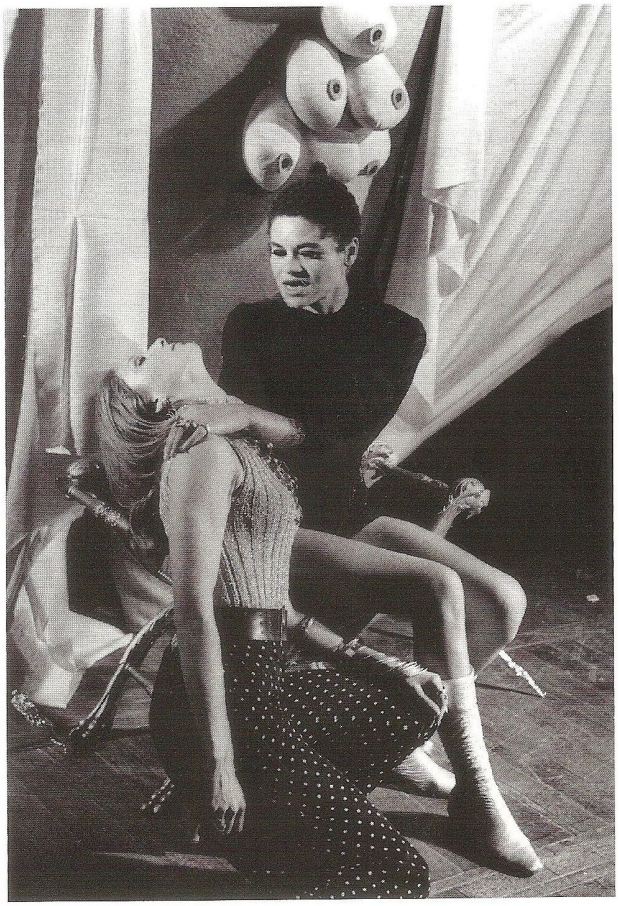
Left to right: Annie Merlin, Jacqueline Sieger, Rollin's brother Olivier, Barbara Girard & Alain Beaujour



Bernard Cetrou

Filming the Queen of the Vampires: Jacqueline Sieger.

Ariane Sapriel



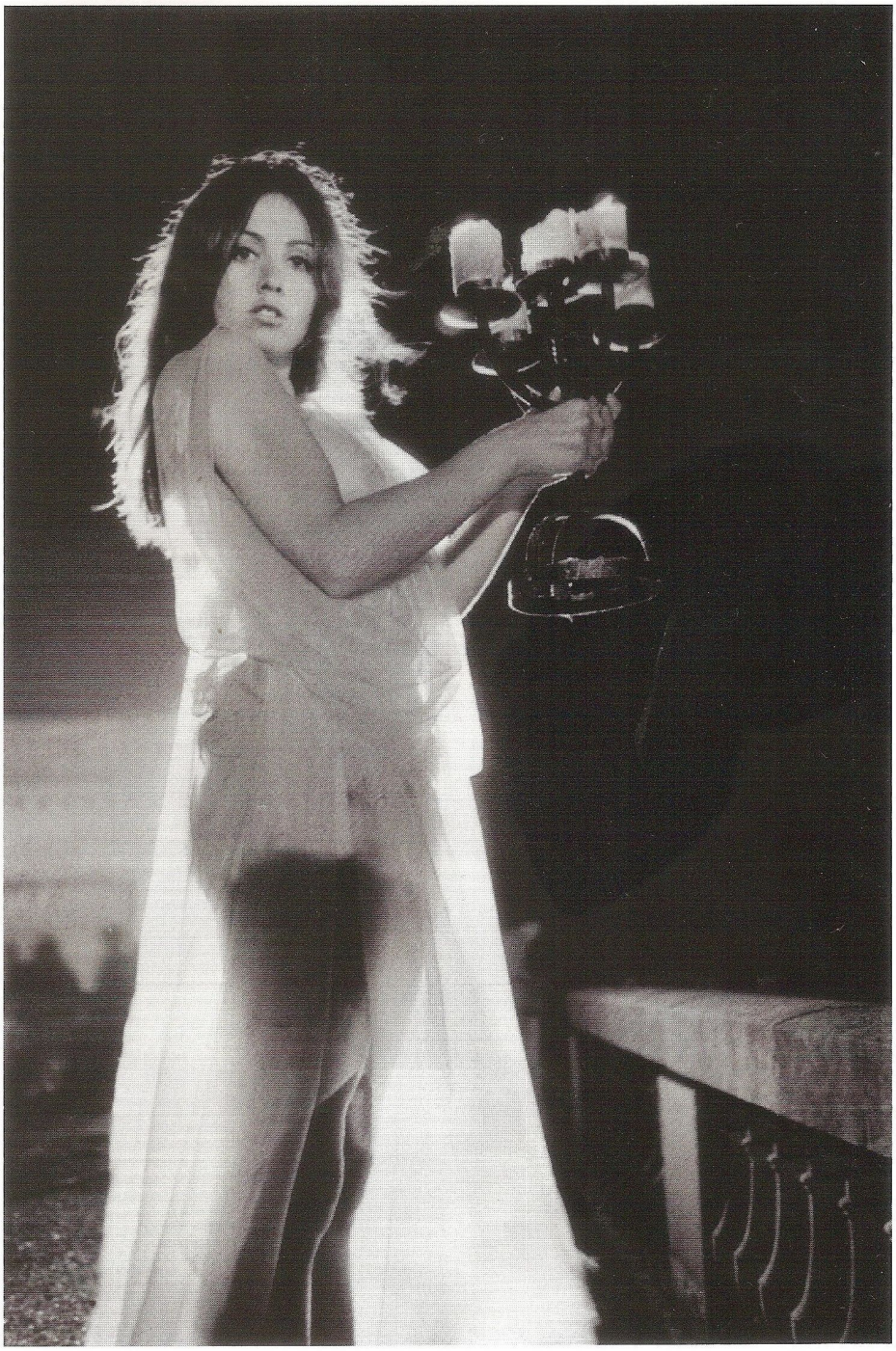
Ursulle Pauly & Jacqueline Sieger

Jacqueline Sieger

1969

La Vampire Nue

The Nude Vampire



By the time my second film rolled around I was a little wiser. I wanted to make a film "the real way," with a story that was easy to understand, a real production with a screenplay and time to prepare. I worked on the script with Serge Moati, and then we went into production. I managed the finances very poorly, and within a short time all the money was gone. Some bounced checks brought the film to an abrupt end. After the last day of shooting everything came to a standstill. I had built up some considerable debt, and without a film the money was not going to come back in. Also, the editing had not been done yet. To make matters worse, I was confined to bed after having been hit by a car. A few times I dragged myself to the editing room on crutches only to find it deserted or the editors busy at work on something else because they weren't being paid.

In LA VAMPIRE NUE, I again succeeded in including certain images that were important to me: the men with animal heads; the curious drawing room-library I had rented on the Cours Perimony check, where I had a harp brought in. And the fantastic labyrinthine château, where the naked vampire with orange veils, a candelabra in one hand, wandered... Then there was Maurice Lemaître, who sounded so false that it became a style. He called it playing like DOCTOR MABUSE... There was Paul Briscigla who became a very good friend, and Caroline Cartier who wasn't what one would associate with a vampire woman, but who was extraordinarily charming nonetheless... And above all the two Castel twins, serious as popes, two little hairdressers thrilled to be realizing their Hollywood-dream, coming of age just before the shoot.

I wanted them by my side every day, until the production director Jean Lavie let me know that I was "vampiring" them, sapping them of their energy and wasting them away. They looked like two little celluloid dolls dressed up for some perverse game. Jio Berck's costumes resembled sadistic machines likes the ones described by the Comptesse de Ségur in "On ne prend pas les mouches avec du vinaigre." One of the twins knocked herself out while falling down a flight of stairs. (The scene is in the film.) She was very proud of it and is still talking about it today.

Finally, I'm very fond of the scene towards the end where R.J. Chauffard (a marvelous actor who disappeared during the shoot of LA ROSE DE FER) plays opposite Natalie Perrey, who was working with us for the first time. Natalie was to reenact her old-lady role in LEVRES DE SANG, LA ROSE DE FER...

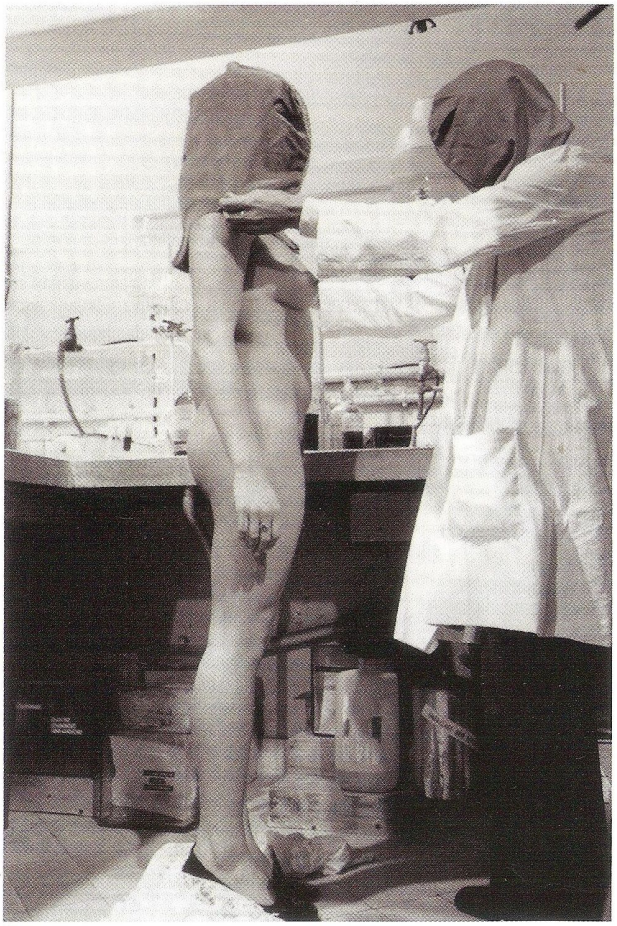
LA VAMPIRE NUE was conceived as a mystery film. There were a few strong ideas (not very well executed, I realize now) like the hidden young girl who has never seen a human being; the guru type played by my friend Michel Delahaye; the final theatrical revelation: the vampires aren't vampires... they are mutants; a scene shot on my "fetish" beach at Pourville.

There was only one canister of film for the entire scene. I was terrified, checking the camera every few seconds. All this happened under the eyes of the old reporter from the "Nouvelles Dieppoises," faithfully showing up on his moped to take "his" picture of the weird film people.

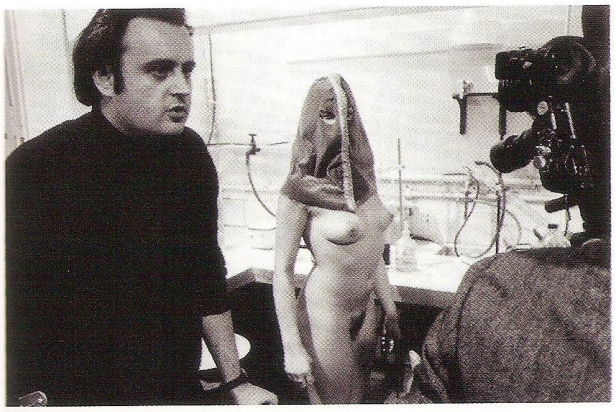
Again, the screenings were punctuated by laughter and sarcastic remarks. For me the most painful laughter came during the scene on the beach; on the pebbled shore a vampire suddenly emerges from a box. This is one of the most unusual images of my cinema, and despite the whistling and heckling it remains dazzling for me. It's there that true strangeness lies.

Even more so, because the director of photography was afraid of the water and I was left to shoot the scene waist-high in water.

Jean Rollin

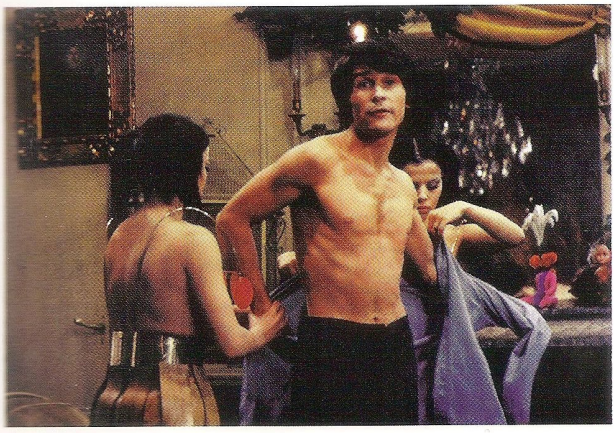


Bizarre animal masks in Rollin's surreal tribute to George Franju's JUDEX.



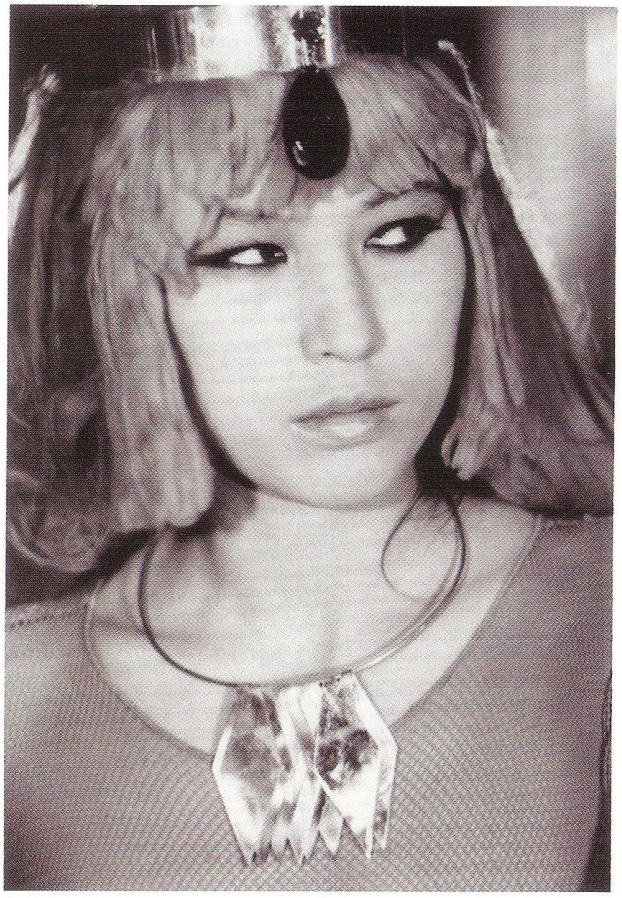
Jean Rollin supervising the laboratory scene.

Maurice Lemaitre and his servants Catherine & Marie-Pierre Castel, at the time appearing under the names Cathy & Pony Tricot.

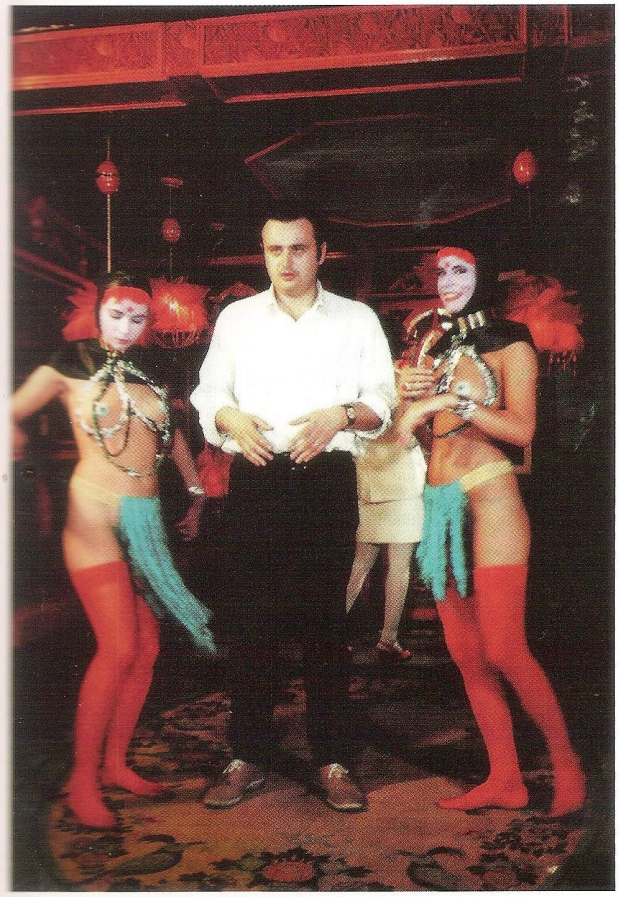


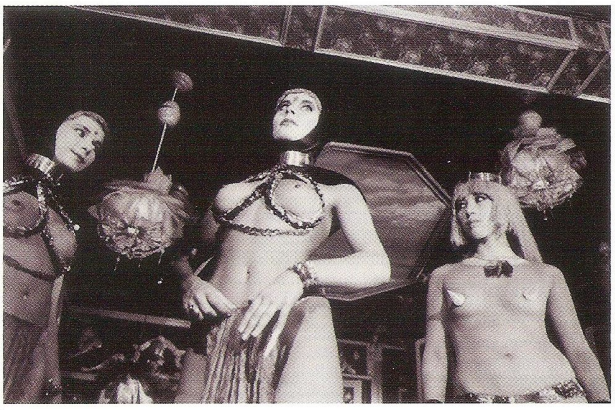
Olivier Rollin

Maurice Lemethre & Jean Rollin (r.)



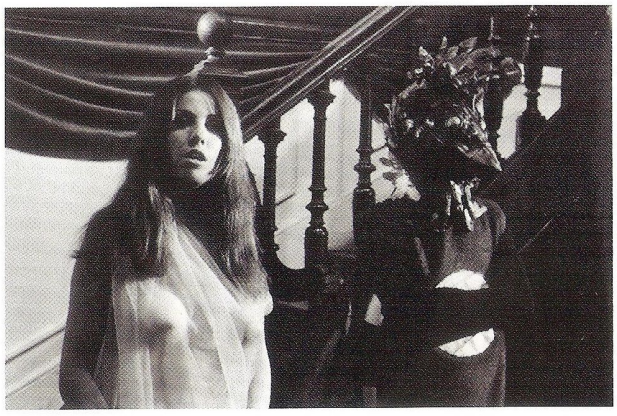
Lee Letronc

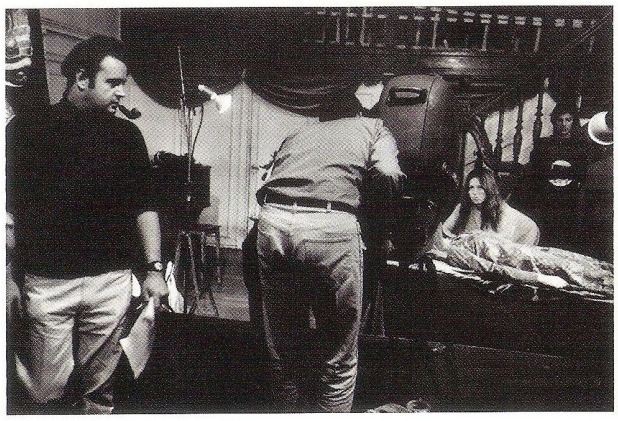


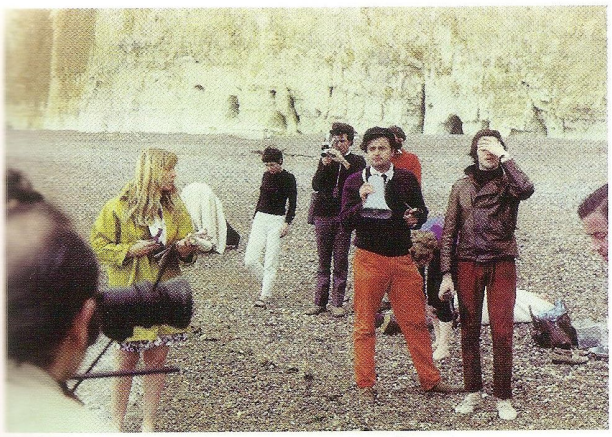


Jean Rollin and his fetish dancers during a shooting break.

Christine Françoise, the tragic heroine of LA VAMPIRE NUE.

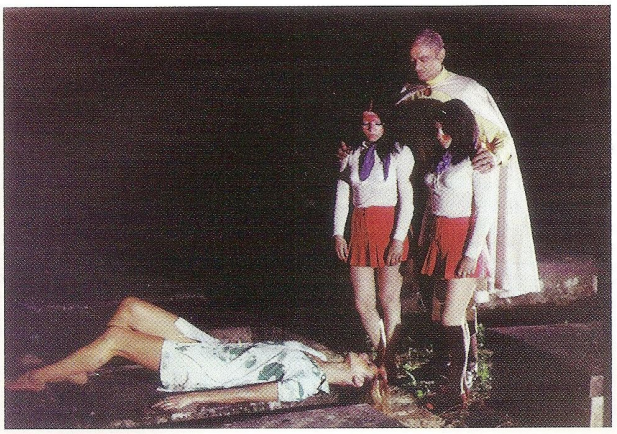




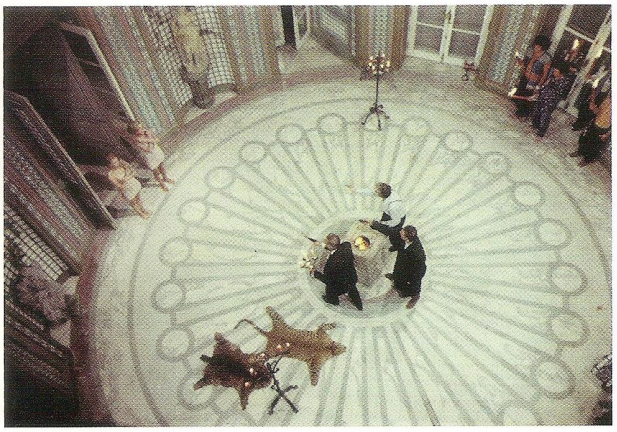


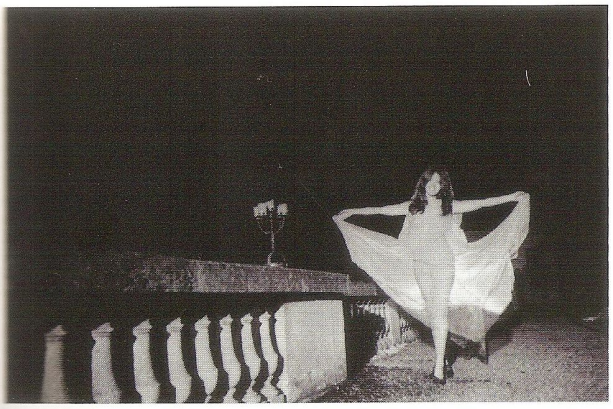
Rollin at one of his favourite locations; the beach at Pourville.

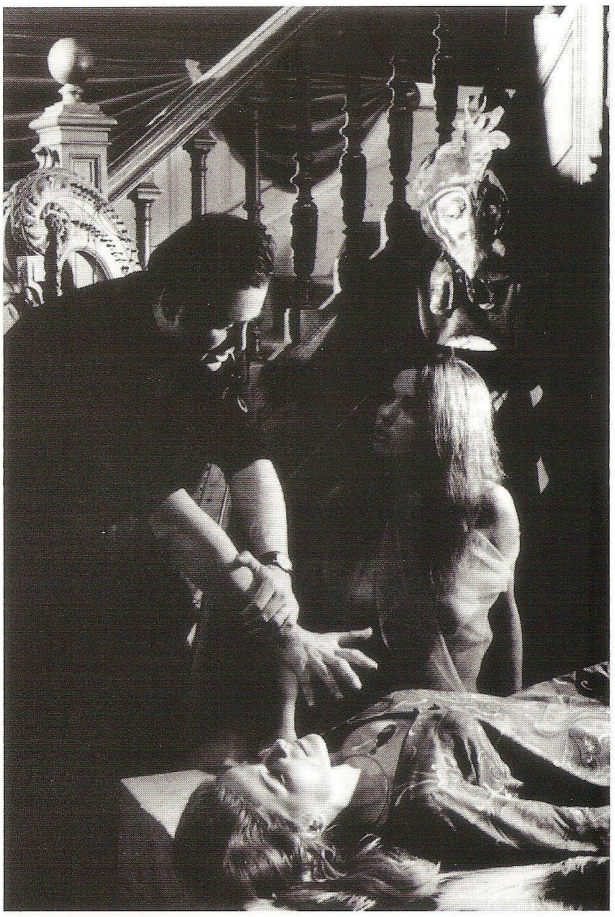
Michael Delahaye



Ursule Pauly (on grave).



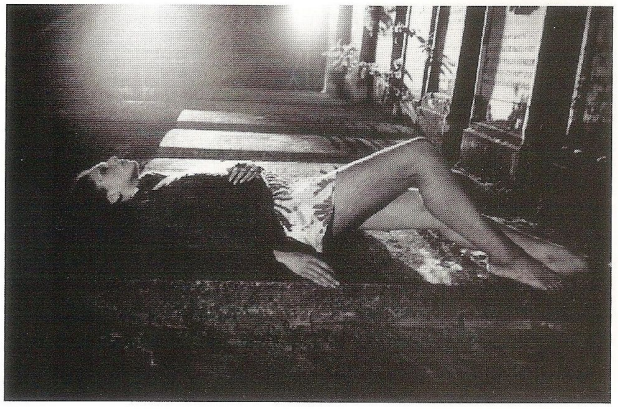


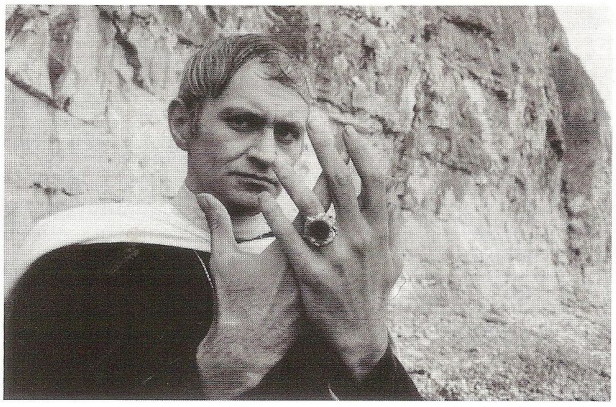


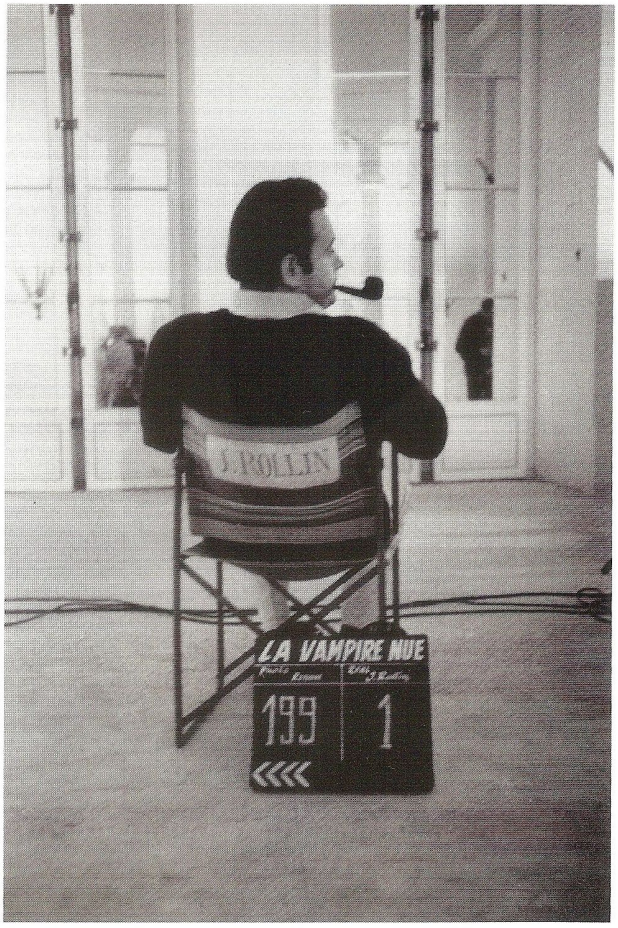
»Nie vampires but mutants« at Rollin's beach.

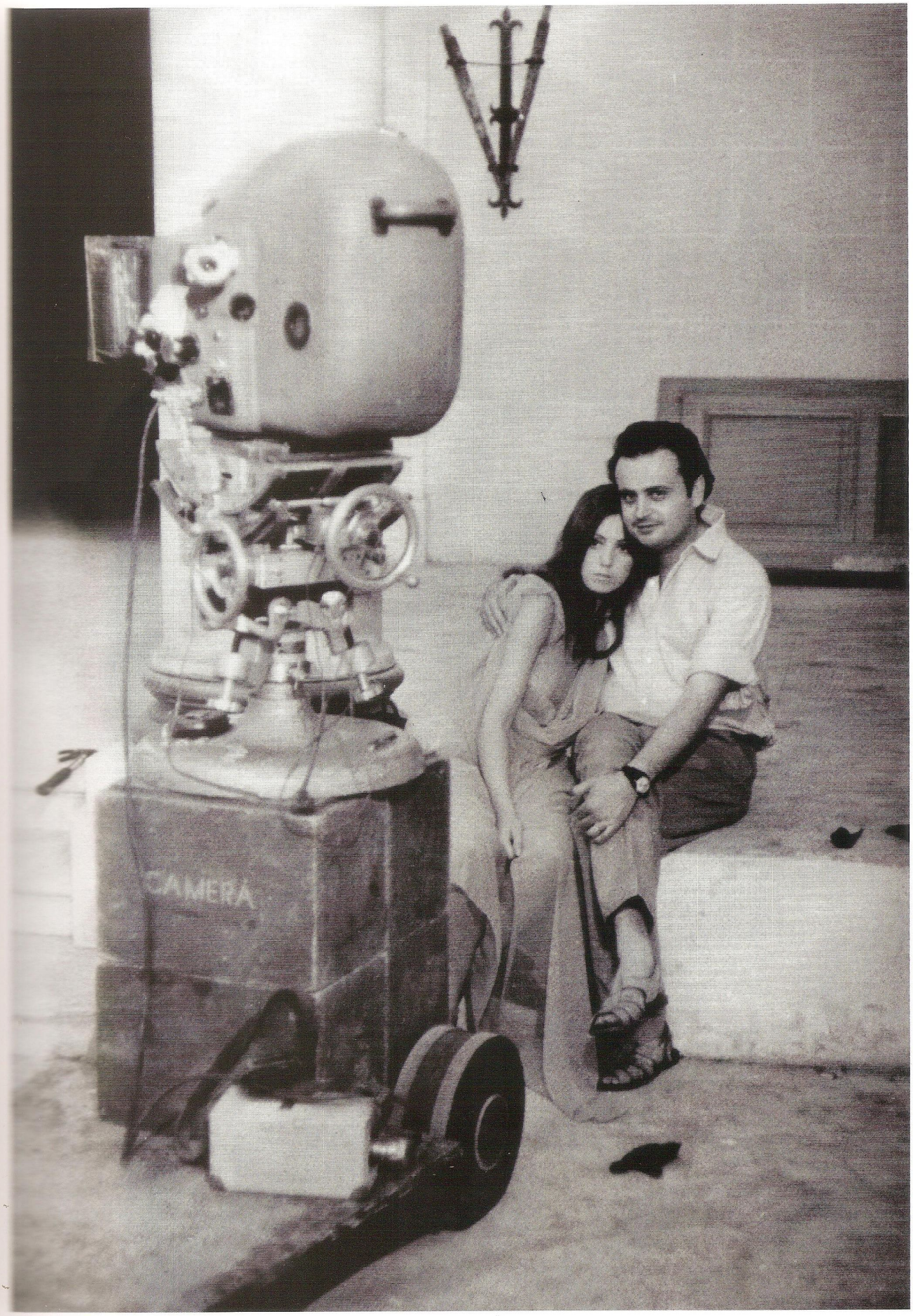
Lise Leitronc

Pascal Fardoulis








CAMERA

1970

Le Frisson des Vampires

The Shiver of the Vampires

LE FRISSON was a much easier shoot for me. Seen in retrospect anyway, since every film left me exhausted and a little more shattered. This was my third film and a certain routine had been established. For the first time I immediately found the framework and the objective I needed. It was a great pleasure constructing the images. Jean-Jacques Renon's cooperation was essential: he was entirely in tune with me, splashing color in the castle tower as if it were a candy cane. The two actors were trying to outham each other. They went rifling through Natalie's bags in search of hippie-style necklaces and other jewelry. And I dared to make a woman come out of a clock on the twelfth stroke of midnight to the great shock of my producer. Having her come down the chimney into the drawing room like Santa Claus; talking from inside her coffin during the day, posed on a recamier like in Magritte's painting. Finally the meeting in the graveyard between the bride in white and the widow in black. Everything in this film was easier: I wasn't responsible for the finances. And I was again able to shoot the finale on the beach at Dieppe.

For the soundtrack, my friend Jean-Philippe Delamarre rounded up some young high school students who were playing funny "pop" music. The group Acanthus unfortunately didn't stay together.

Some of the images and dialogue in LE FRISSON made me very happy: a beautiful scene at the cemetery with green and red smoke wafting through the air; the vampire woman's declaration, "C'est ici que ceux que l'on croit vivants pratiquent le culte de la mort. C'est ici que ceux que l'on croit morts pratiquent le culte de la vie." ("It is here that those that are taken for the living practice the cult of the dead. It is here that those who are believed to be dead practice the cult of the living.") I am quite fond of this kind of slightly melodramatic lyricism. There is a similar line in LE VIOL, where someone says, "Nous sommes tous des maudits avec les désirs secrets qui nous hantent." ("We are all cursed with secret desires that haunt us.") Lines one would expect from Gaston Leroux.

Never before did Renon use more dazzling, baroque, phantasmagoric lighting. Natalie provided him with case after case of white wine which he found indispensable to the creative process. By the same token, the flask of bourbon tucked away in my jacket pocket helped me through the grueling night shoots.

With a deliberately surrealist look à la Paul Delvaux I indulged myself with certain images. A chaste female nude (one of the Castel twins, Pony) appearing motionless in strange locations: in a ruins overgrown with vegetation; on a stone staircase leading to nowhere; atop a tower laughing; peering out of a loophole; standing at the bend of a corridor; etc.

All the things that I have been reproached for, my visual ticks, were there: candelabras, transparent veils, cemeteries at night, chaste nudity, ruins and eery lighting—all of this, much to everyone's great delight. And the improvised climax of a corpse on a sedan hurled into the moat amidst a riot of multicolored smoke. We shot this in the middle of the night using spotlights diffused by an assortment of lively-colored gelatins. A truly amazing scene to shoot and to look at.

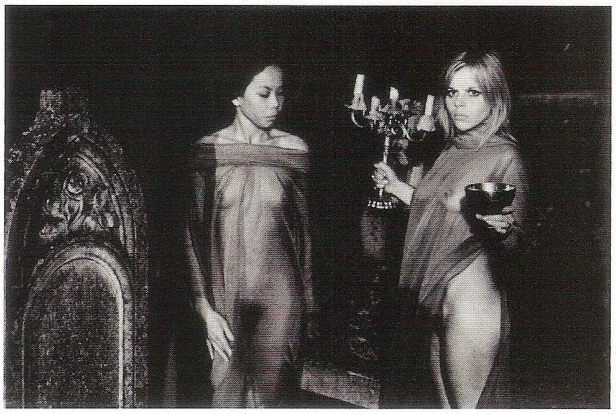
All this was a great joy. And for the finale, 50 liters of red paint poured from on top of the tower to make the château bleed, a scandalous apotheosis that no one has forgotten.

FRISSON DES VAMPIRES was a nice break for me: no jeering, no scandals, an almost normal course of events.

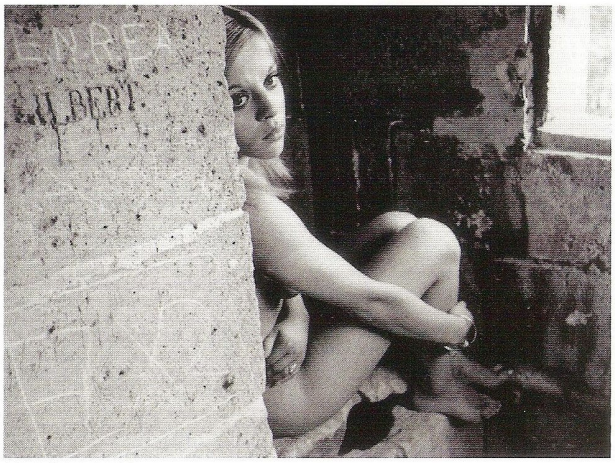
But it was just a break.

Jean Rollin

Dominique & Sandra Julien in Rollin's Hippie-Vampire tale LE FRISSON DES VAMPIRES



Kuelan Herca & Marie-Pierre Castel

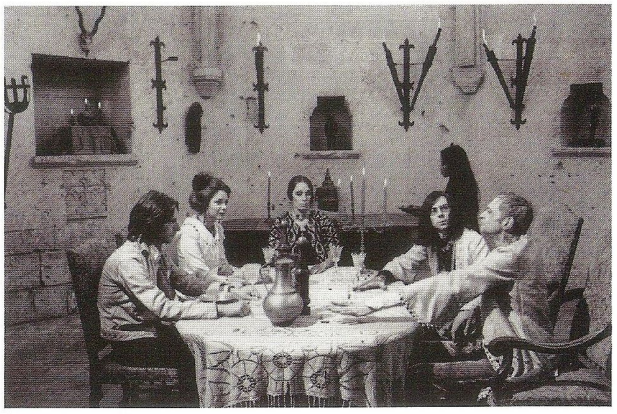


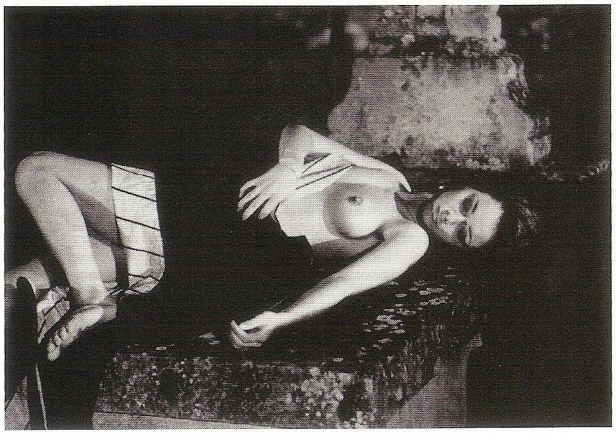
Marie-Pierre Castel

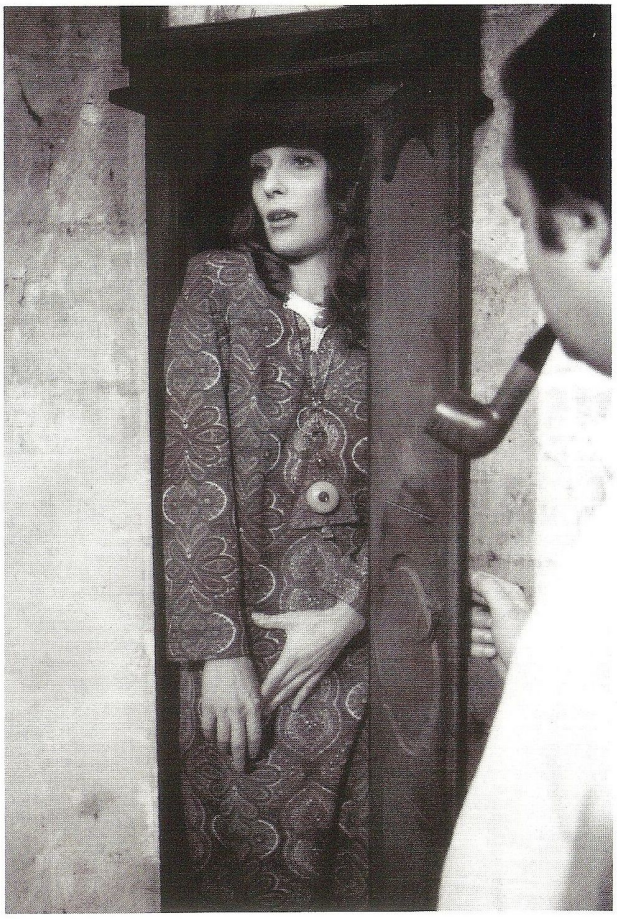
Dominique, one of Rollin's most unusual vampire girls.

Michel Dalahaye

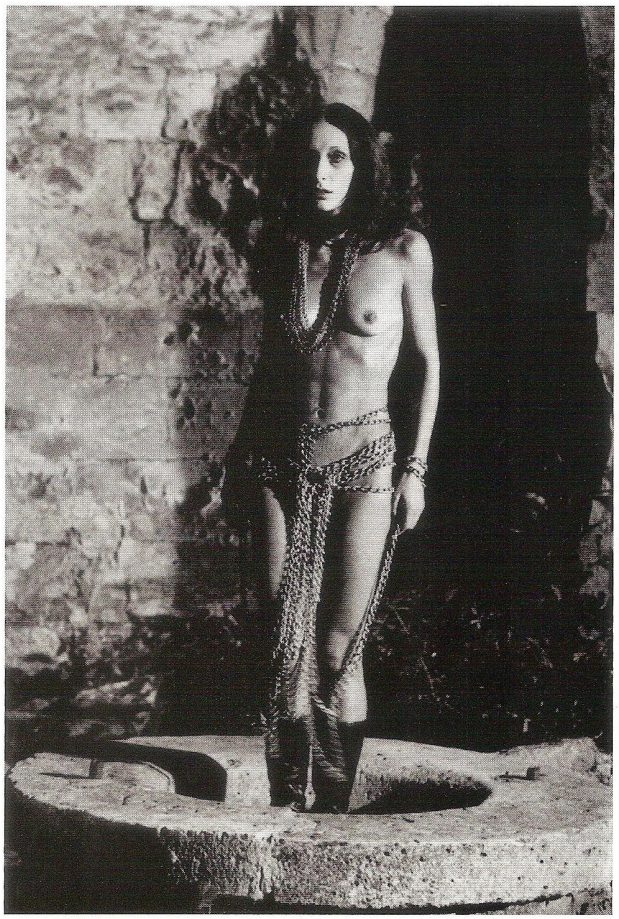
Jacques Robiolles & Michel Delahaye, the vampire hippies, at the beach of Dieppe.



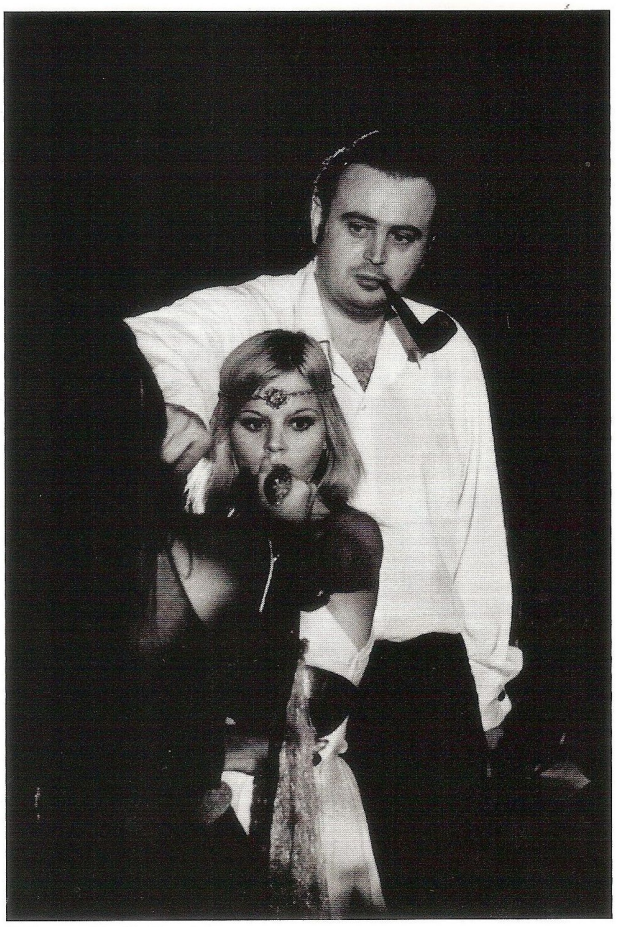




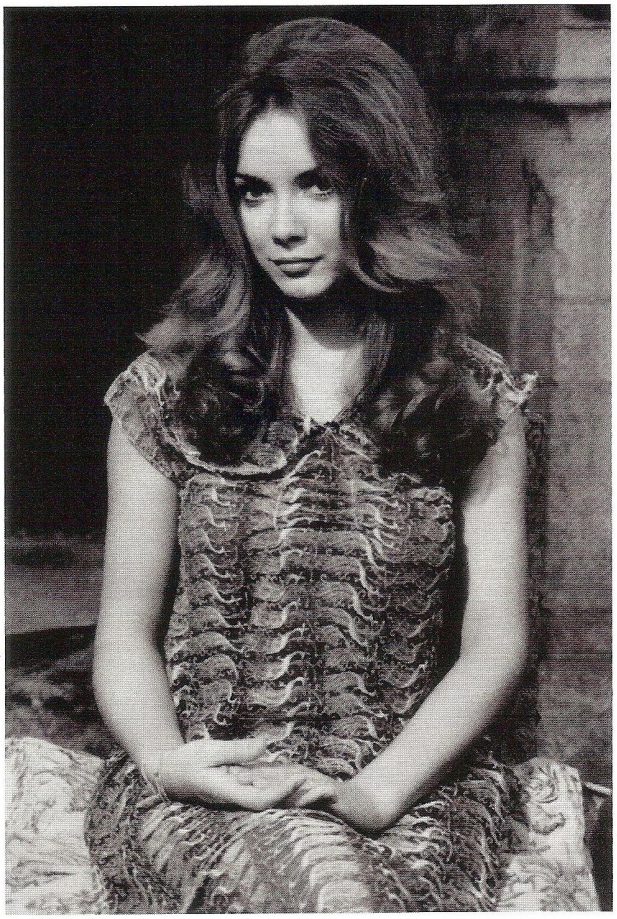
Dominique



Dominique in one of the most publicised shots of Rollin's films.

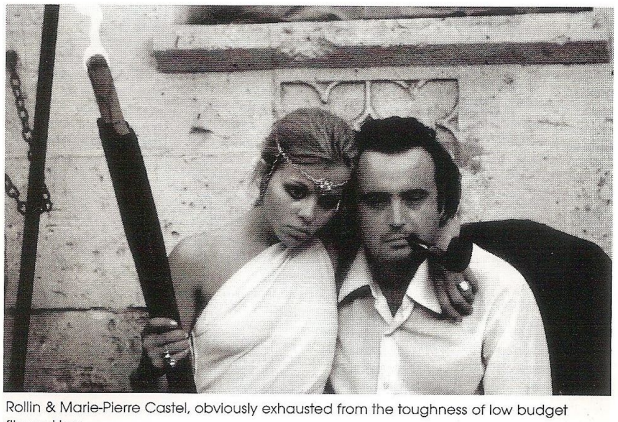


Rollin supervising the blood ceremony.

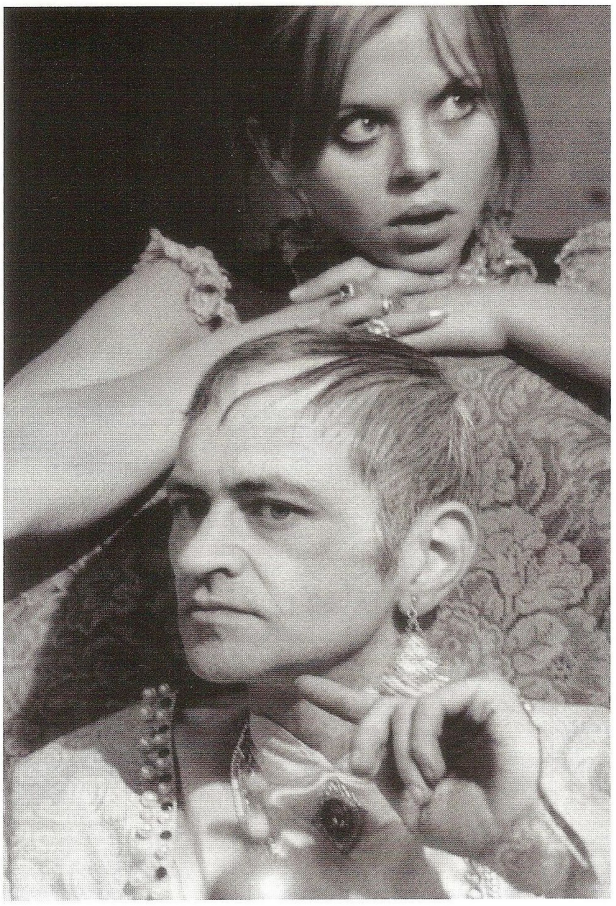


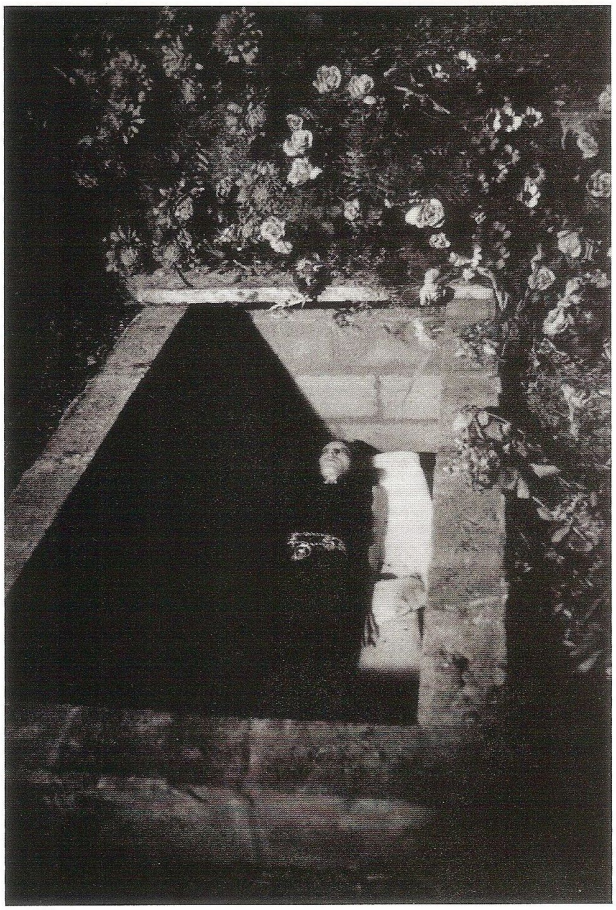
Gorgeous Sandra Julien, ex model turned actress, as the romantic lead of FRISSON.

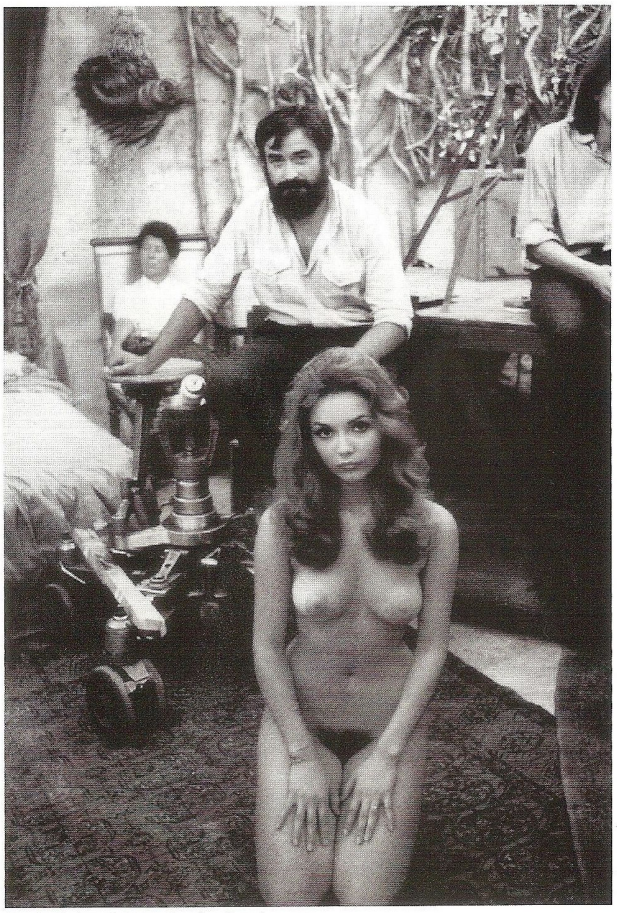
Rollin instructs Sandra Julien on the pigeon scene, one of the most beautiful moments of the film.



Rollin & Marie-Pierre Castel, obviously exhausted from the toughness of low budget filmmaking.







Sandra Julien during a shooting break.

Marie-Pierre Castel posing for the photographer.

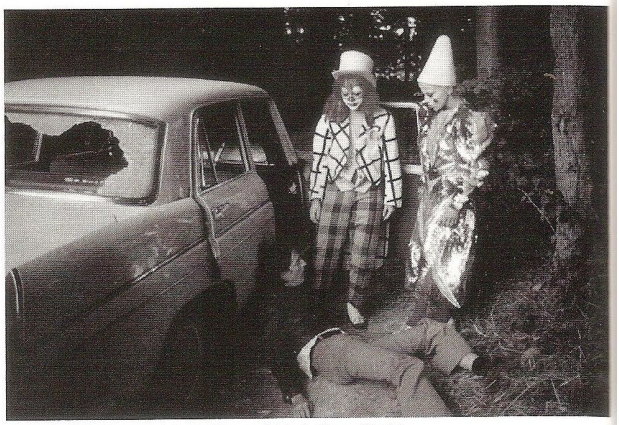
1971

Requiem pour un Vampire

Requiem for a Vampire

This was my first film with Lionel Wallman, accompanied by Sam Selsky. My second and last film shot for recreation.
I was used to the critics' insults, the public outcry, and I started shooting for my personal pleasure exclusively since the others had rejected me.
REQUIEM is an attempt to simplify the structure of a film to an extreme. This concept was pushed even further in LA ROSE DE FER.
The script was written spontaneously, that's to say like somebody telling scary stories to youngsters around a campfire, making up the story as he goes along. Two fugitive girls have a number of adventures before falling into the hands of some vampires. For at least an hour not a word is spoken. Excluding the—timid—erotic scenes this could be a film for children made by children. It's a fairy tale. Once again a couple of young girls amongst the ruins of a château. The strange Dominique plays an evil woman once more, like she did in FRISSON.
The production gave birth to juicy anecdotes. Lionel Wallman had an old car that was registered in Belgium. We burnt it in the beginning of the shoot and abandoned it in the woods. The car was covered with fake bloodstains and bullet shells. The Police found it, sent the "blood" samples and shells to a lab in Paris and alerted Interpol. They combed the area until the film crew stepped forward. A great disappointment for the gendarmes who had hoped that they had uncovered an international affair of revenge.
This is the first film with Louise Dhour, a longtime friend, who marks certain scenes with her arresting presence. She would be back and even more striking in LES DEMONIAQUES.
REQUIEM doesn't contain any aggression, or real violence. No gore, just a whipping scene that is only slightly sadistic. On this occasion I was treated to a disastrous crit by Delfeuil de Ton, the movie critic for "Charlie Hebdo." He had already penned some unkind words about LE FRISSON. The result was terrible: on the day his article came out tickets sales at the Styx plummeted. It's a shame, I would have thought that he had a sense of humor and not this aggressive hostility which is a sign of a mediocre mind.
The film was not viewed as an experiment in simplistic cinema, but since the basic plot was rather straightforward and easy to follow the general public came out to see it at the Midi-Minuit and Scarlett theatres.
I love certain scenes: the clowns (who resurfaced in LA ROSE and LES DEMONIAQUES); the arrival at the château; organ cords shattering the silence; skeletons in the chapel. All the things in fact that are "scary without being scary," straight from some serial or naive dime novels. REQUIEM is a naive film. The naïveté isn't forced, but reflects my state of mind at the time. That's what makes it so charming.

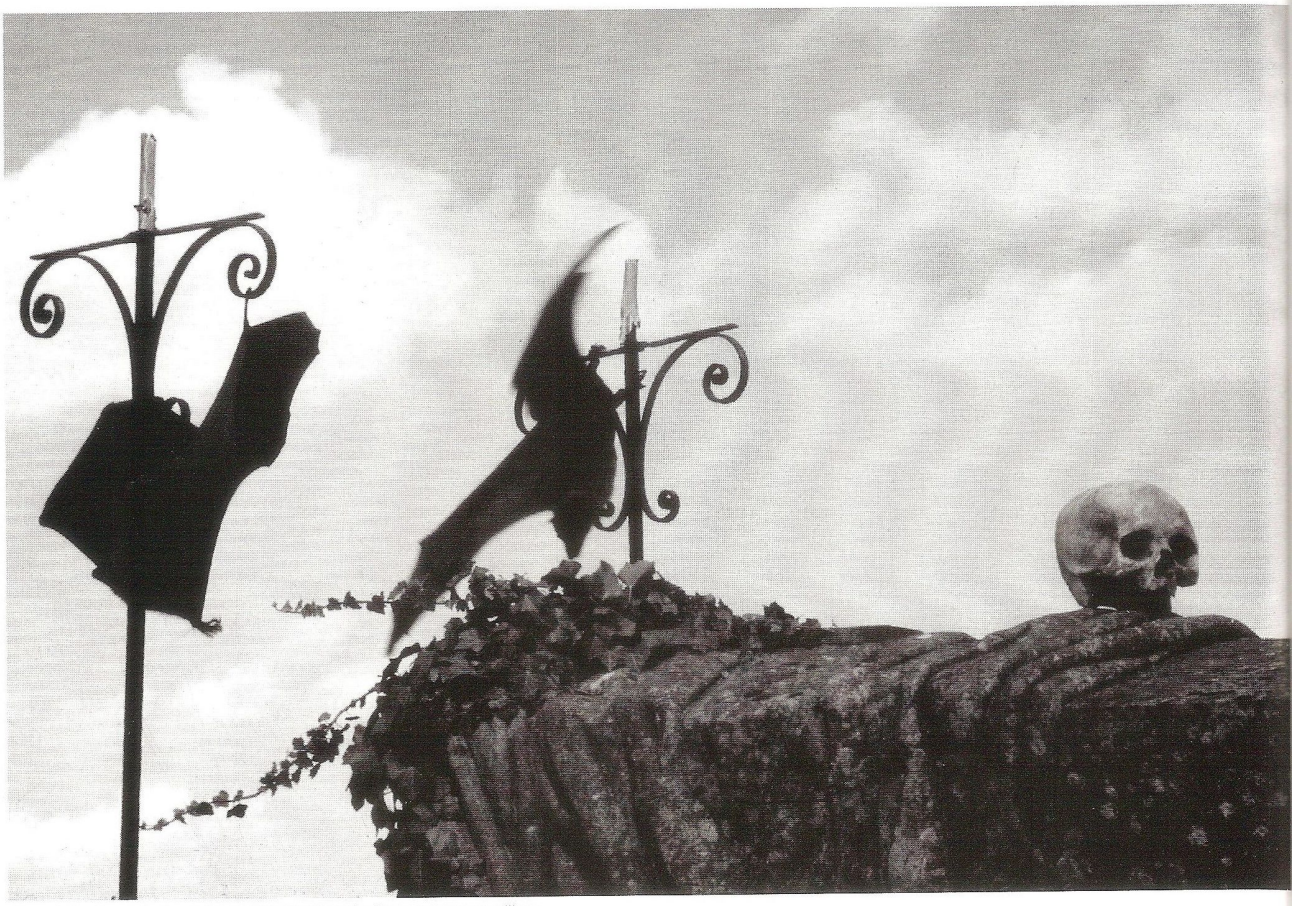
Jean Rollin



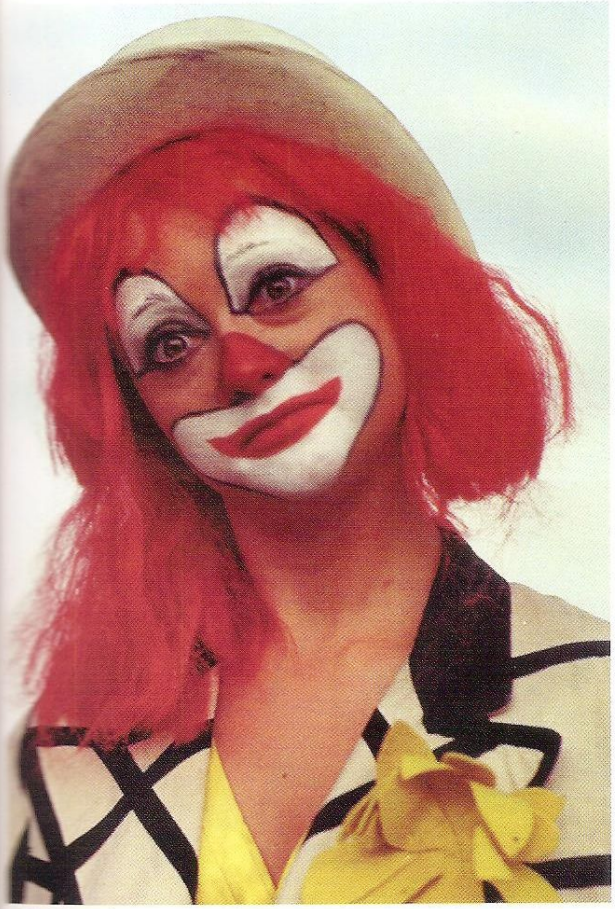
Jean-Noël Delamarre, Mireille Dargent, Marie-Pierre Castel.

Jean Rollin directing the clowns during the opening sequence of REQUIEM POUR UN VAMPIRE.

A traveling shot, Rollin-style.

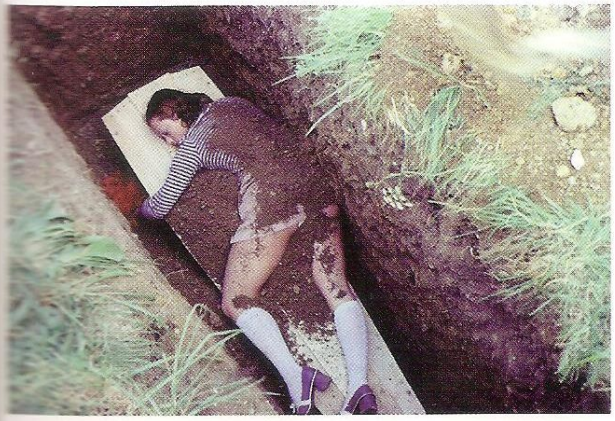


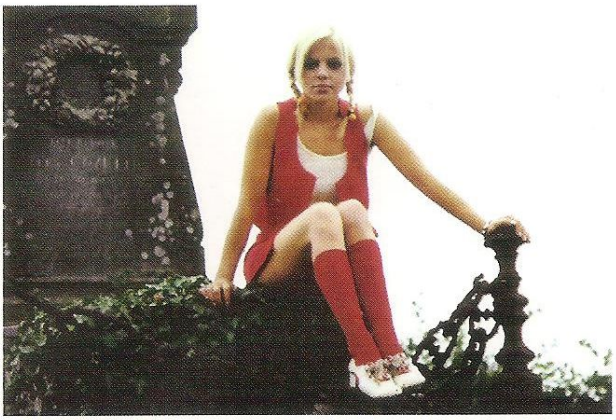
One of director of photography Renan Polles' fascinating scene compositions.

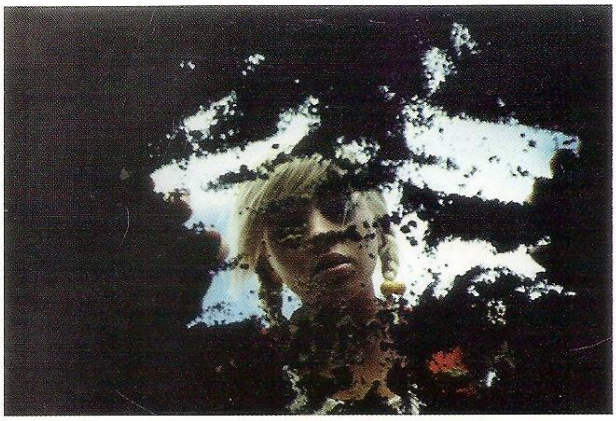


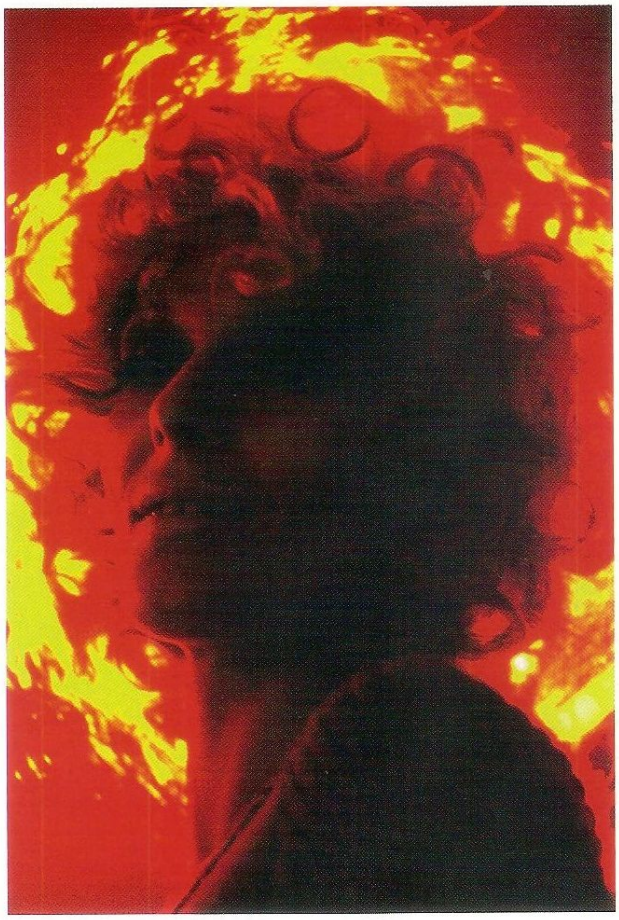
Mirelle Dargent

Marie-Pierre Castel.

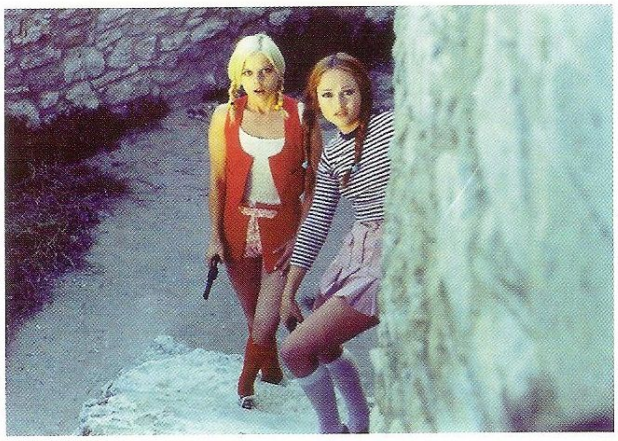


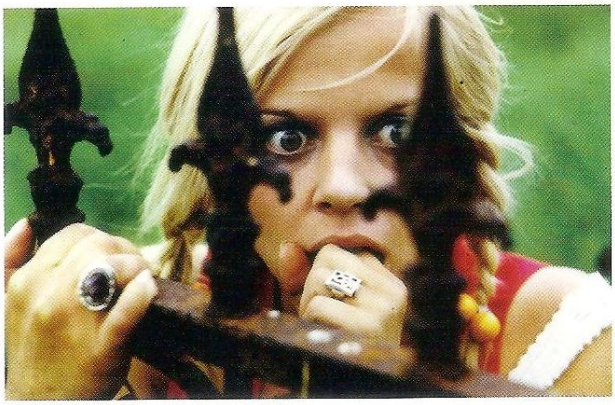




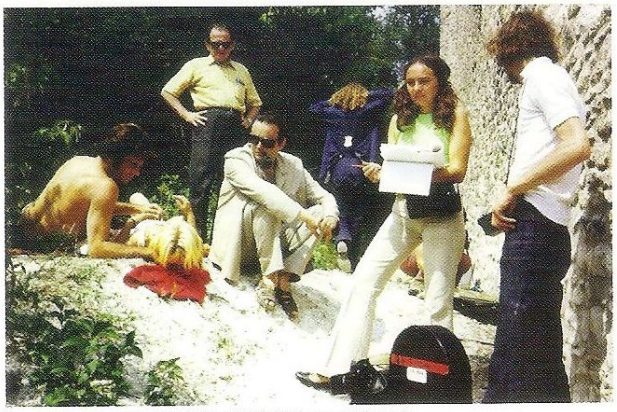


Dominique & Paul Bisciglia

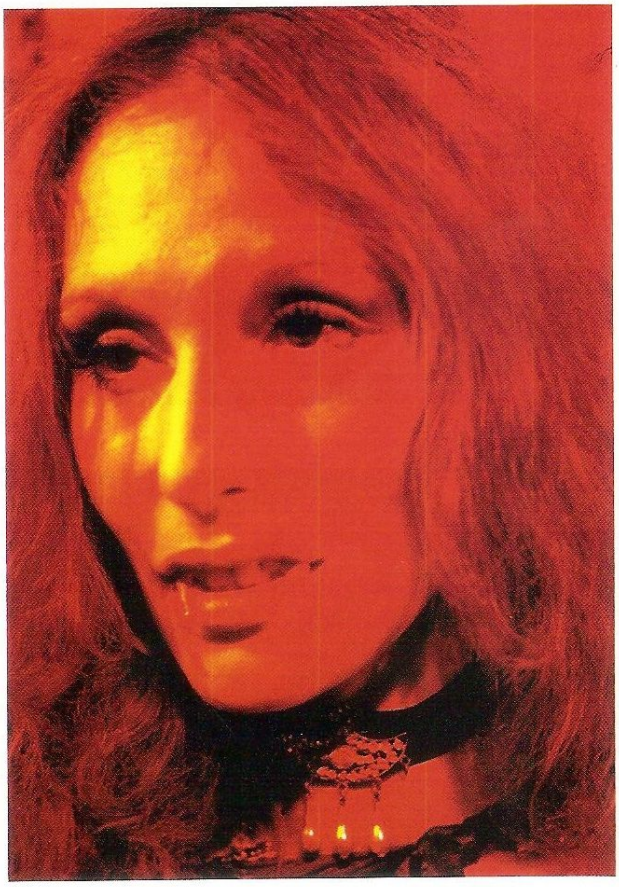




Marie-Pierre Castel

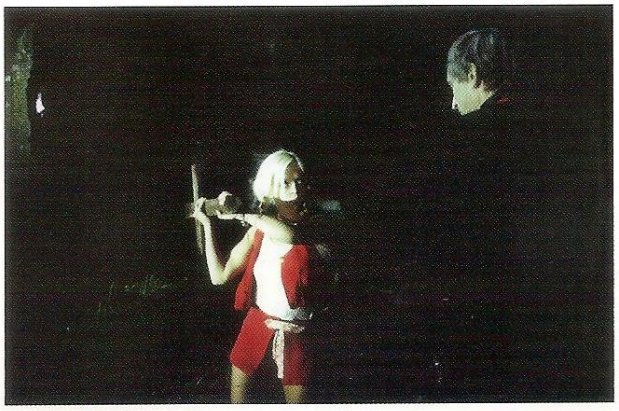


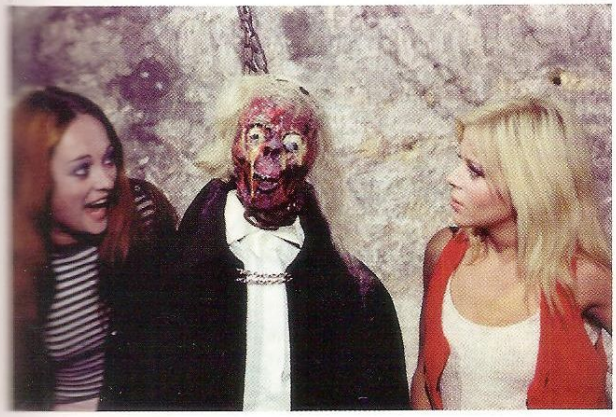
Sam Selsky (standing left), Rollin & Natalie Perrey on the set.



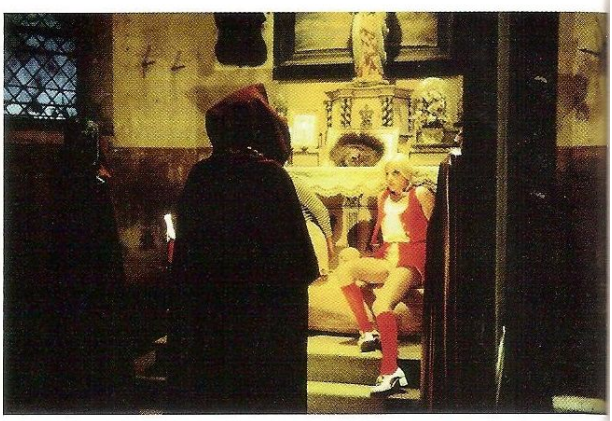
Dominique

Jean Rollin and his leading actresses rehearsing a scene.

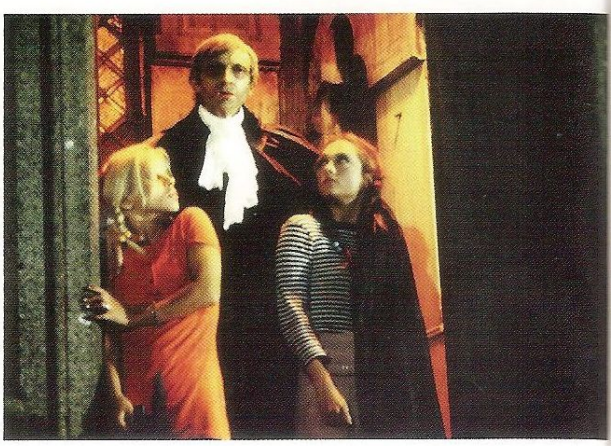


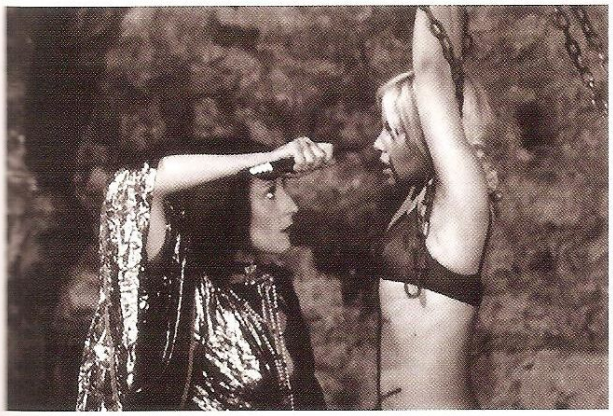


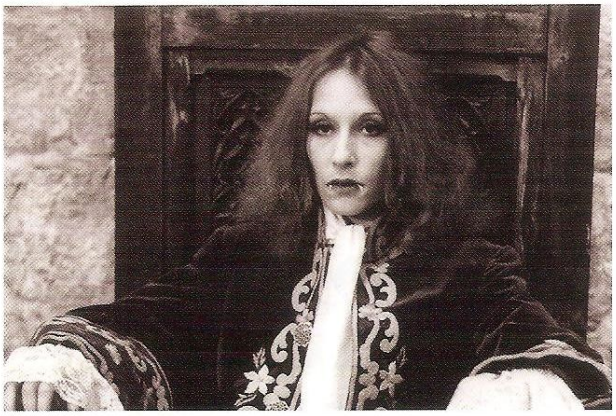
Michel Delesalle

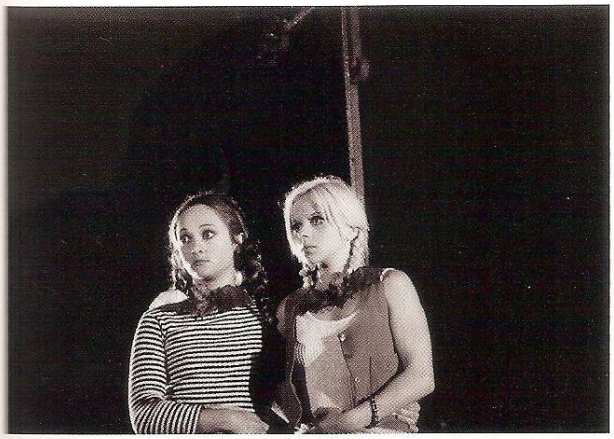


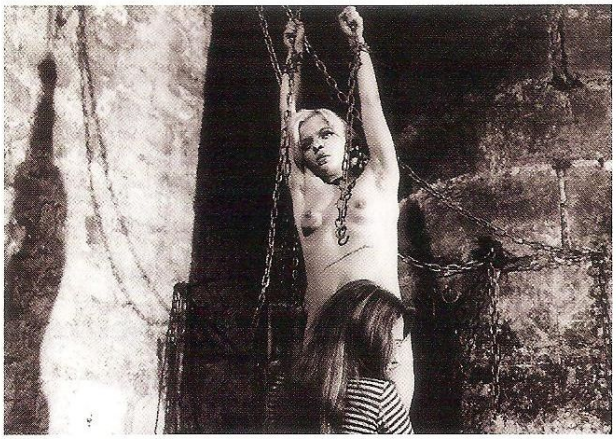
Antoine Mausin & partner







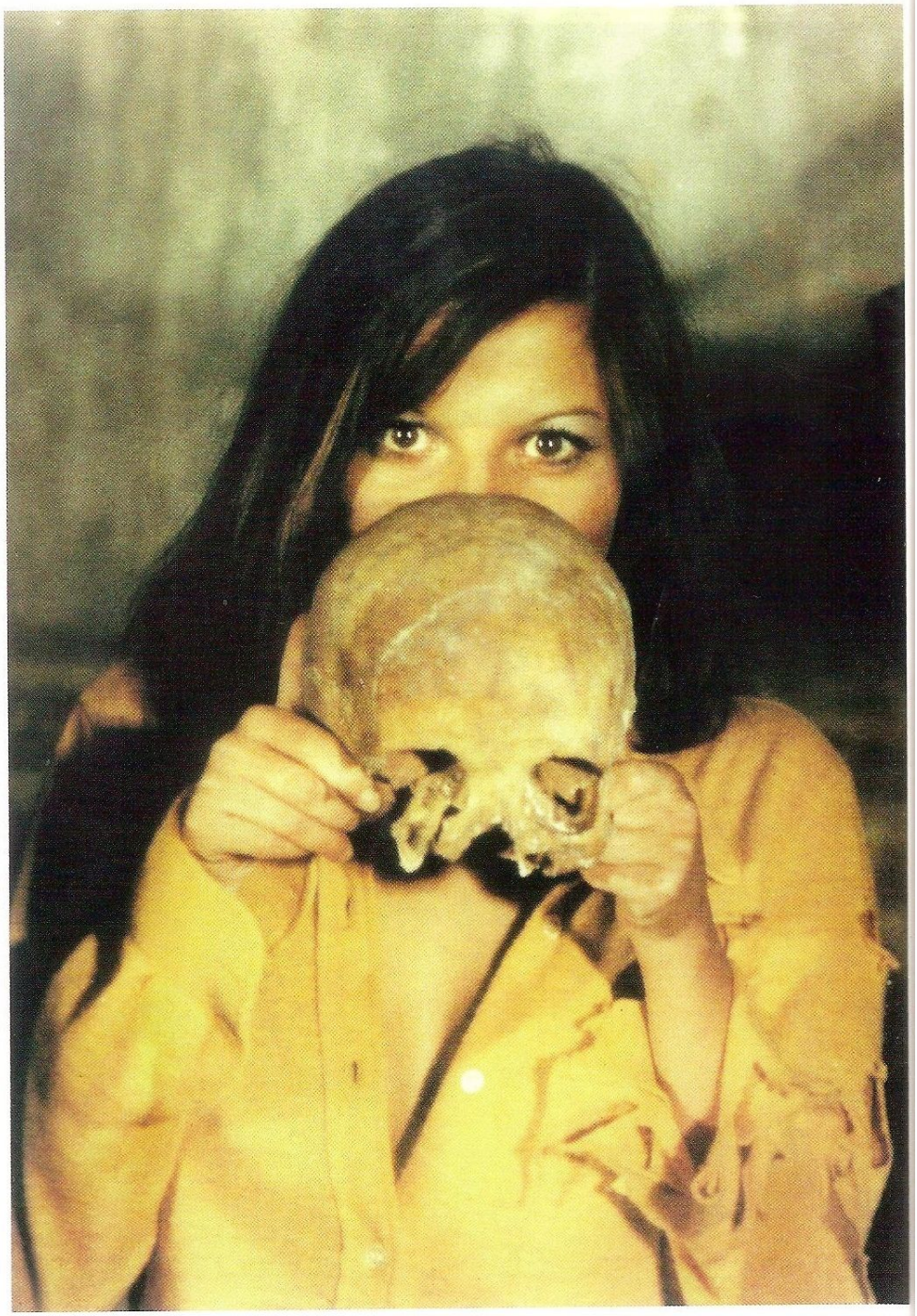




1972

La Rose de Fer

The Crystal Rose



Far more dark and desperate a film than one would think, LA ROSE DE FER, certainly my greatest commercial failure, begins as a commonplace love story and turns into the tale of a woman's dramatic self-destruction. The female character borders on the tragic whereas her male counterpart remains the same close-minded, little provincial guy for the entire film.

She is full of passion, and since her passion isn't shared at all by her companion she projects it onto the cemetery. It's the cemetery, huge and enigmatic, that she loves. Maurice Lemaître, who helped me with the adaptation understood this conceit very well.

LA ROSE DE FER picks up on my pursuit for simplification that was begun in REQUIEM. As with LES DEMONIAQUES it was impossible to find an actor that fit the image I had in mind. It was a magnificent role for an actor—a true actor—and yet it was rejected by a number of young actors; beginners who were put off by the austere look of the story. They suspected a trap.

Sam Selsky had a woman come over from London who might have been suitable. She was good, just like the young man, but neither one of them was what I had imagined.

What's more the male lead took himself terribly seriously, which I detest. We are bear trainers, stall hands and nothing more. Technicians and actors. Those who see in this profession asceticism or a vocation are ridiculous.

The spectacle must be created with fun and pleasure. Those who walk around with their heads buried in their hands before each take are fakers.

I had fun shooting in the cemetery. Wherever we put the camera we immediately found an angle; a sense of depth was created in the environment of tombs and old iron crosses. The whole world that man stupidly devotes to a handful of buried dust.

For director of photography Jean-Jacques Renon, who took his cordials like clockwork and who often had to be supported by his technicians, the film was like an animated painting. I was at ease in this deserted place, and despite some friction with the actor, the night shoot—four weeks—was stimulating.

It would have been nice if the film had been crazier. I would have liked to add a shot with old locomotives to the scene of the clown traversing the tombs with a bouquet of flowers to be placed on the grave of his partner: in the spirit of Buñuel, who wanted to assemble an orchestra of 40 musicians in black tie in a dilapidated building that can be seen behind the children in LOS OLVIDADOS. But unfortunately this type of stuff was not possible: again one would have said that I made films that couldn't be understood.

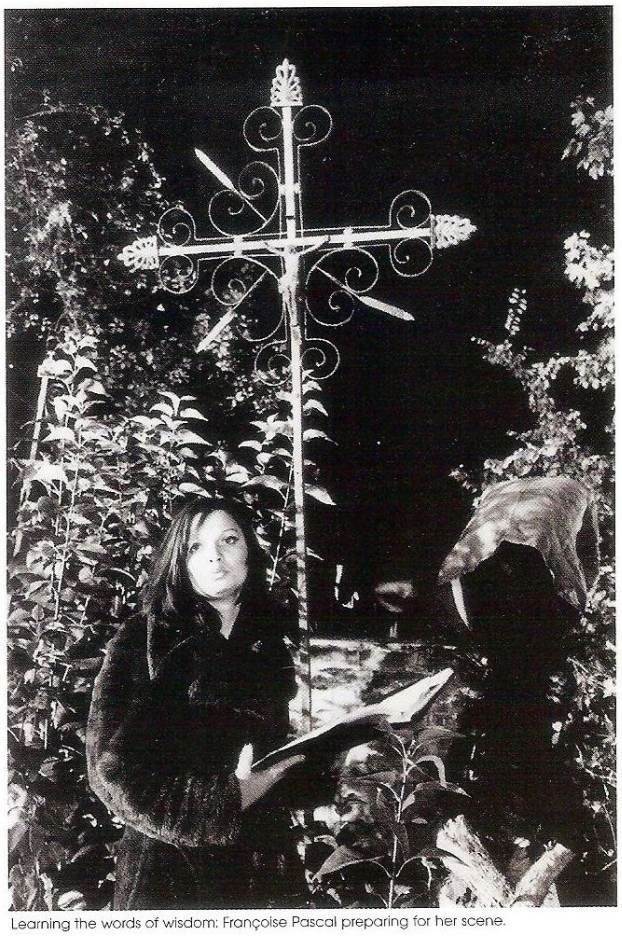
Françoise Pascal was very believable in the heartrending scene where she locks herself into the tomb. In that moment, her eyes fixed, she waits and then shuts the iron trapdoor after herself. The drama is completed with Natalie dressed as an old lady placing flowers on the anonymous grave. Natalie's performance is moving in this simple scene. She was crying. We had just learned of Renè Chauffard's death to whom this film is dedicated.

I also insisted on shooting the scenes in Amiens—which I find very beautiful—that foreshadow the drama which lies ahead. As if the deserted city were itself a cemetery.

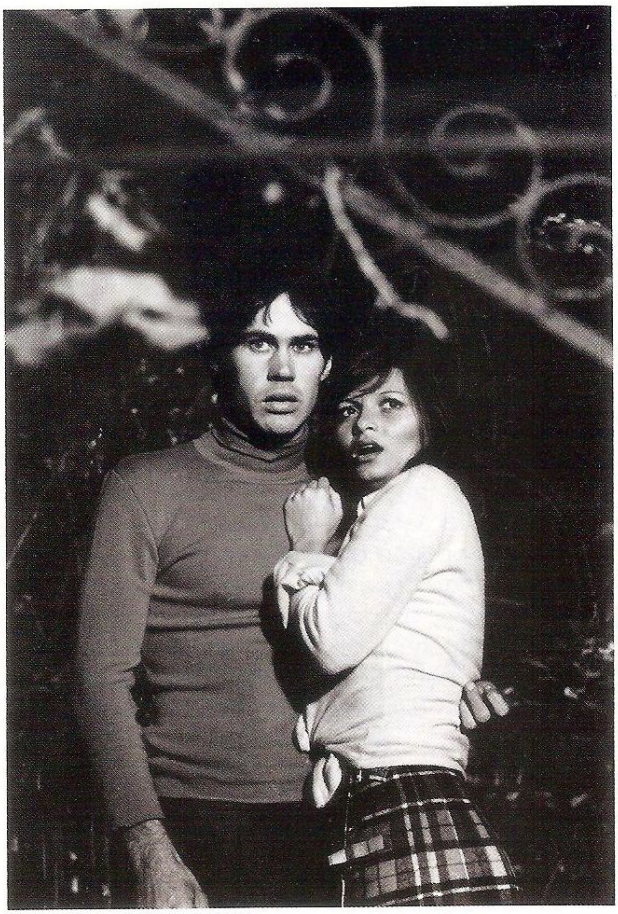
The film has a following. They appreciated the great sadness behind the story, its melancholy and passionate desire for a love that can not be found.

Jean Rollin

Françoise Pascal & Hugues Quester in Rollin's most ambitious and poetic film ever: LA ROSE DE FER.

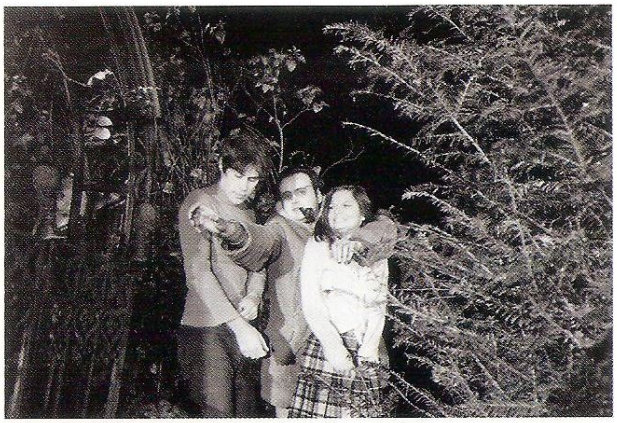


Learning the words of wisdom: Françoise Pascal preparing for her scene.

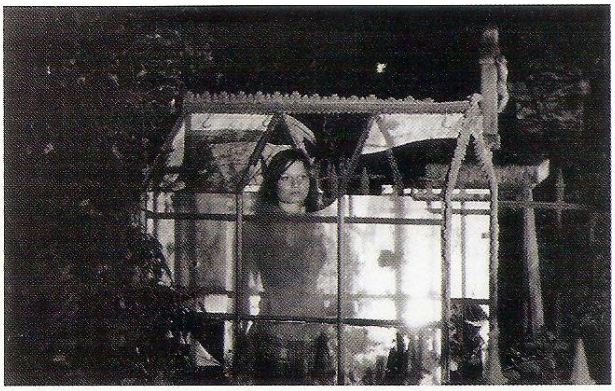


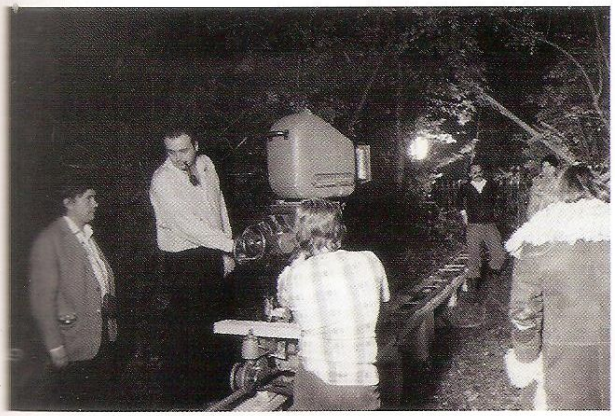
Hugues Quester & Françoise Pascal.

Caressing the »Iron Rose«: Françoise Pascal.



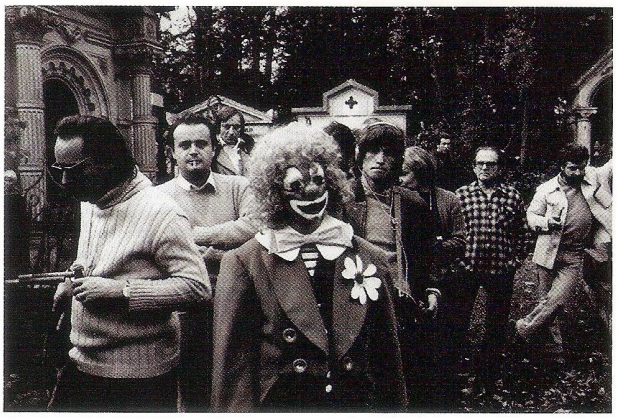
Rollin instructs his protagonists for their »night of the cemetery«.



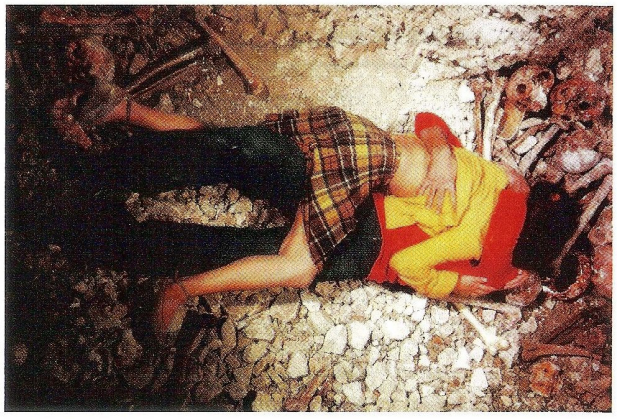


Jean-Jacques Renon (left) and Rollin preparing a difficult travelling shot.

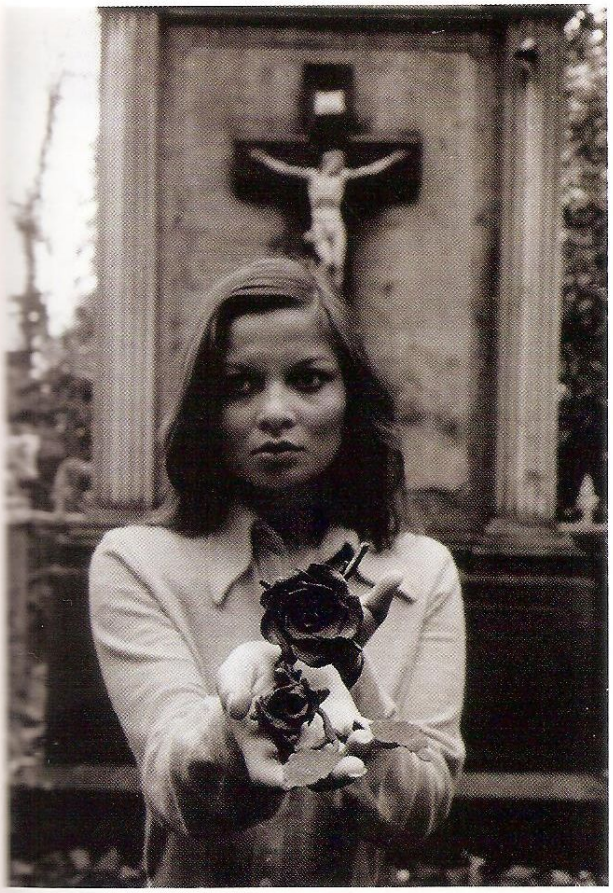
Mireille Dargent, playing on of Rollin's favourite symbols, the clown, in all of the director's early films.

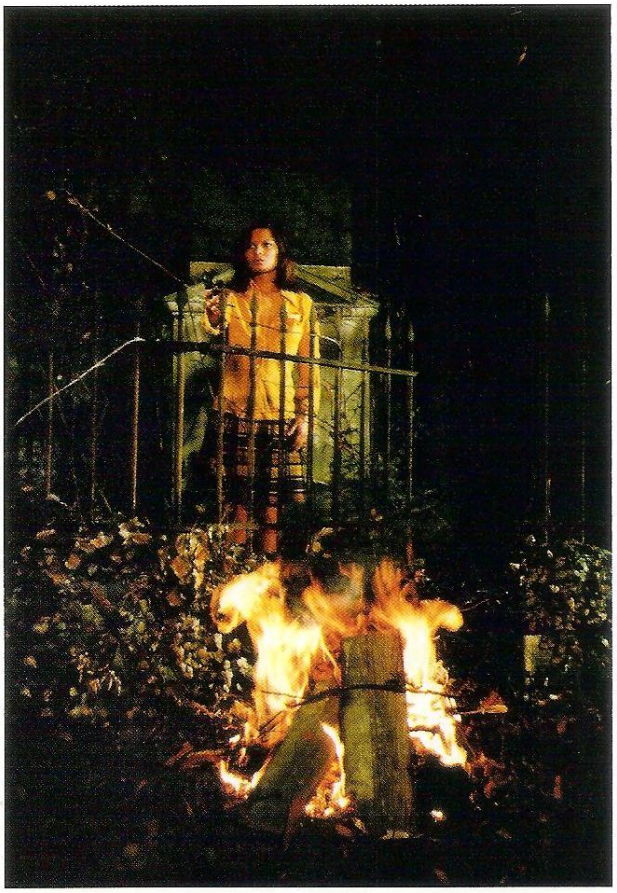


The crew of LA ROSE DE FER at the enormous cemetery of Amiens.

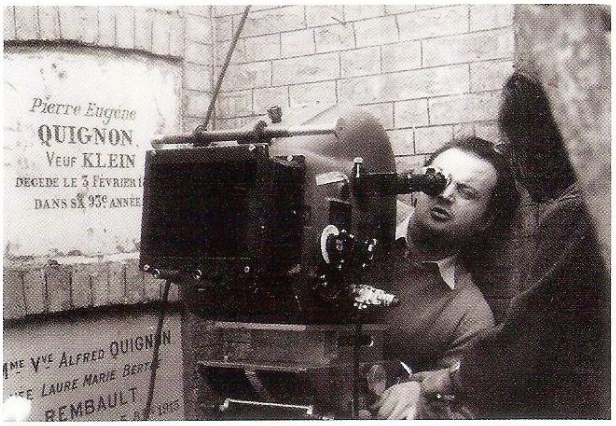


Rollin ready to shoot the haunting »grave lovers« scene.



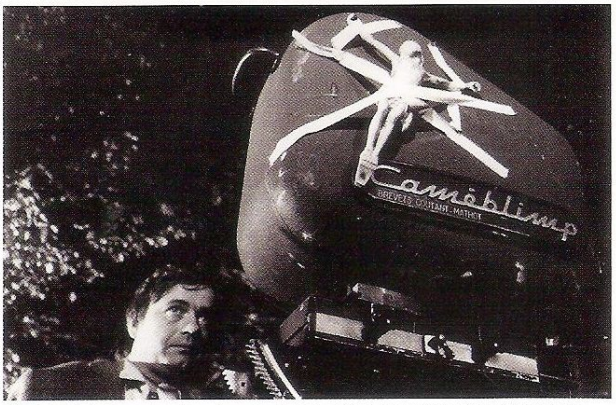


Producer Sam Selsky (right) and Rollin, preparing for his cameo in the film.

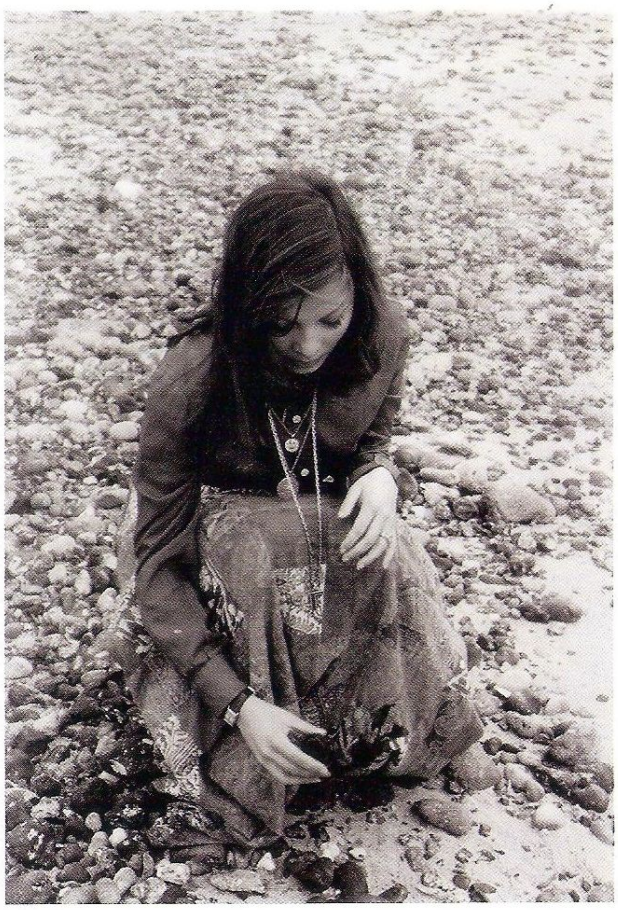


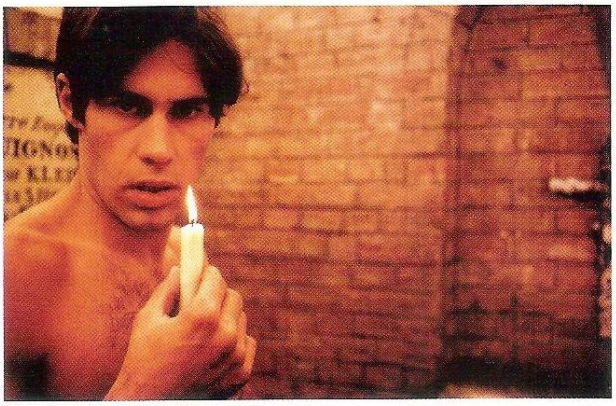
Rollin behind the camera.

Natalie Perrey, collaborator on Rollin's films in front as well as behind the camera.



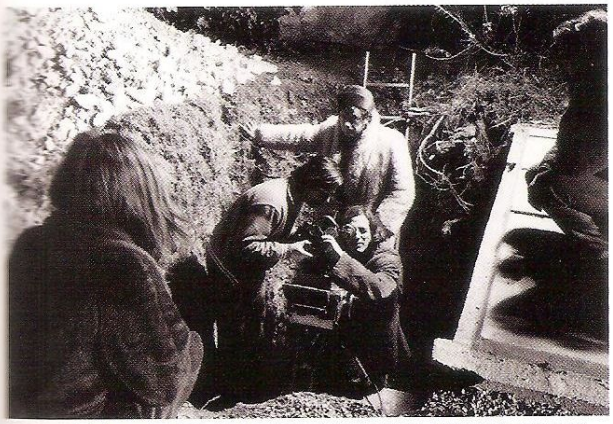
Director of photography Jean-Jacques Renon with his »specially equipped« camera.



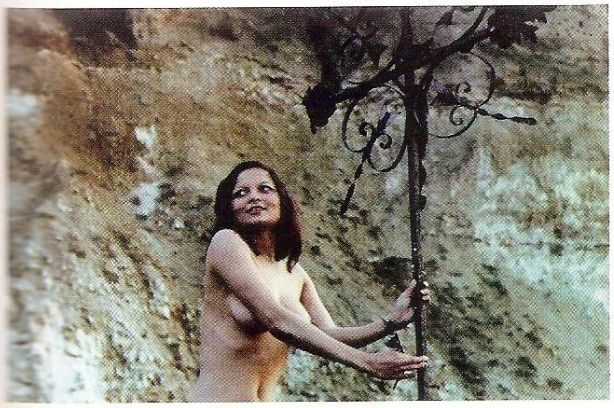


Light & shadow: Hugues Quester.

Françoise Pascal & Jean Rollin at the beach of Dieppe.



Director of photography Jean-Jacques Renon (standing) and Jean Noelle Delamarre (behind the camera) observe Françoise Pascal's play.



1973

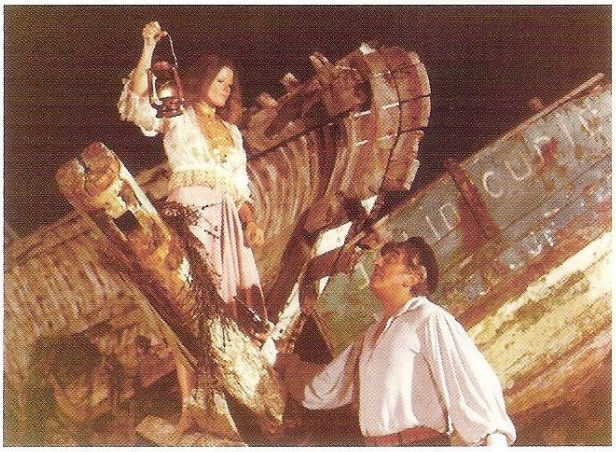
Les Demoniaques

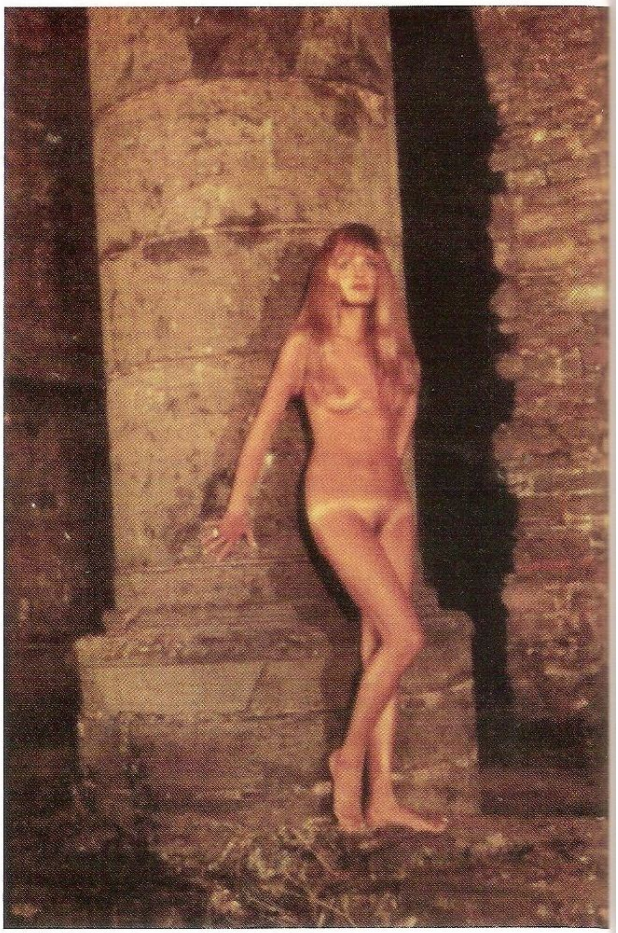
The Demoniacs

At the time of LES DEMONIAQUES I hit an all-time low in popularity. Lionel Wallman, who was producing, and I spent weeks looking for young actors. The absence of the Castel twins hurt since the roles had been written with them in mind. All the young actors and students in Paris refused the parts. A rumor had started that I was running a clandestine prostitution ring! As the first day of shooting approached we were forced to make do with whoever was available. One woman was an unbearably skinny modeling student who refused to eat because she didn't want to put on any weight and who spent her time on the island of Chausey whimpering and shivering with cold. The other one was an adorable young Belgian woman, but despite her long blond hair she was not what I had in mind.
Jean-Jacques Renon was in a foul mood, insulting the Belgian crew members. After seeing the rushes in Paris Lionel came to the set screaming that the material looked terrible, that we would have to start from scratch, and that the film would be unreleasable. This lack of sensitivity killed the crew's moral. I felt like I was fighting with a sleepy lethargic troop. I prayed that Lionel would stay in Paris because he made me lose my confidence.
So, undecided about the film's quality or the lack thereof I withdrew into myself and focused on some images that I was sure were a part of my universe: the tavern in Brussels with phantom apparitions; the entire finale with the rising tide and the naked girls crucified on a wreck; the ship breakers; and the unforgettable song of Louise. So, by bits and pieces LES DEMONIAQUES became a very personal film.
It received a warm reception when it opened in several movie houses in Paris, one of them on the Champs-Elysées.
I have been asked many times why I gave the film the subtitle "film expressionist." Well, partly because of some first-rate acting. I'm talking about John Rico as the crazy captain, Willy Braque as the rowdy sailor, and Paul Bisciglia. With regard to Joëlle Coeur who debuted with me in JEUNES FILLES IMPUDIQUES; she was a sort of lust-provoking animal woman.
Some of my favorite images in this film are more expressionistic than poetic or surrealistic: the shipwrecked Tina fighting with the captain in the rising tide, chest-high in water; the strangled body with protruding tongue; Tina, with naked breasts, tossed about the sea in a pool of algae; the bodies of the two girls on the wreck; the captain seized by terror in the hostel, wrestling with the specters of his victims that only he can see. These are very expressionistic scenes in my mind. The same goes for the black angel with enormous black wings and eyes of fire in the tavern. It's a deliberate homage to one of the fathers of that school of film, Fritz Lang. And especially his baroque masterpiece MOONFLEET.
The demon could be straight out of THE STUDENT OF PRAGUE or out of MONTREUR D'OMBRE by Robison. The clown who is forever walking down a strange staircase in the ruins of the Abbey of Villers La Ville is a direct descendent of one of the clowns from REQUIEM (it's the same actress, Mireille Dargent). She is a baroque figure in the spirit of the German silent films and early talkies.
It's in a clown's disguise that the head spy hides out in Lang's SPIONE.
LES DEMONIAQUES might be seen as an attempt to distance myself from the kind of vampire films I had made up until then, in the sense that it was more of a tribute—at least that was my intention—to the dark lyricism of the German cinema before 1933.

Jean Rollin

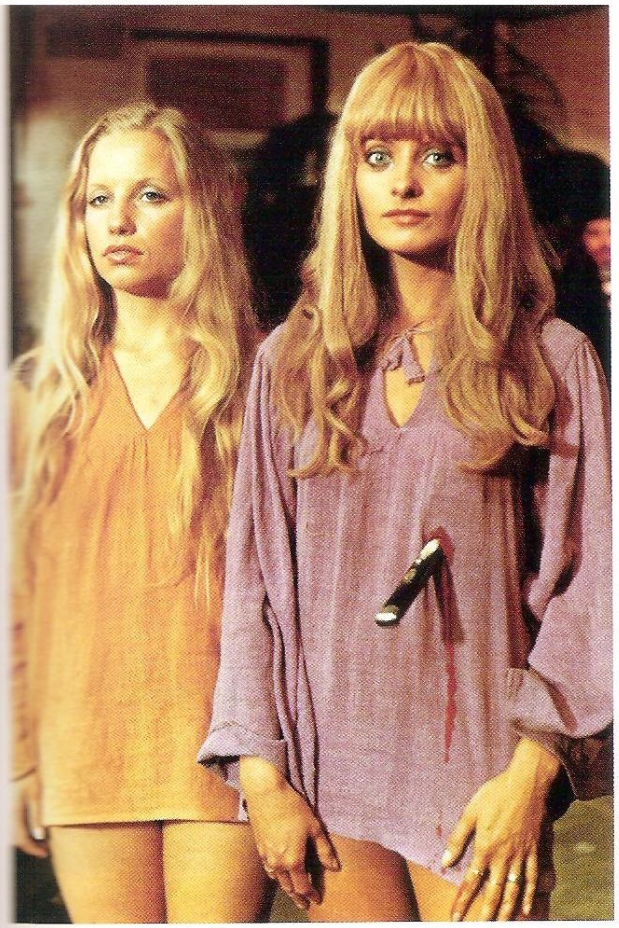
Paul Bisciglia, John Rico, Joëlle Cœur & Willy Braque, the lethal pirates in Rollin's homage to American serials of the 20s.





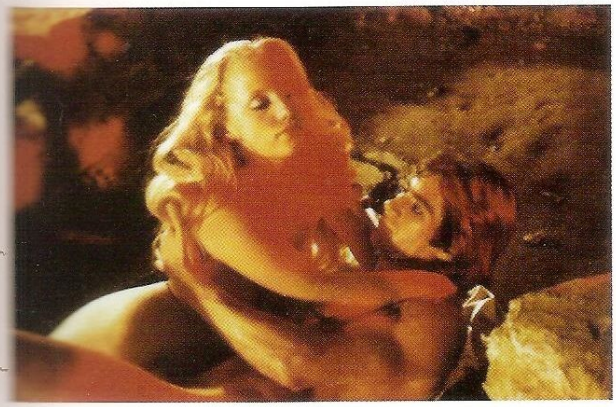
Patricia Hermenier

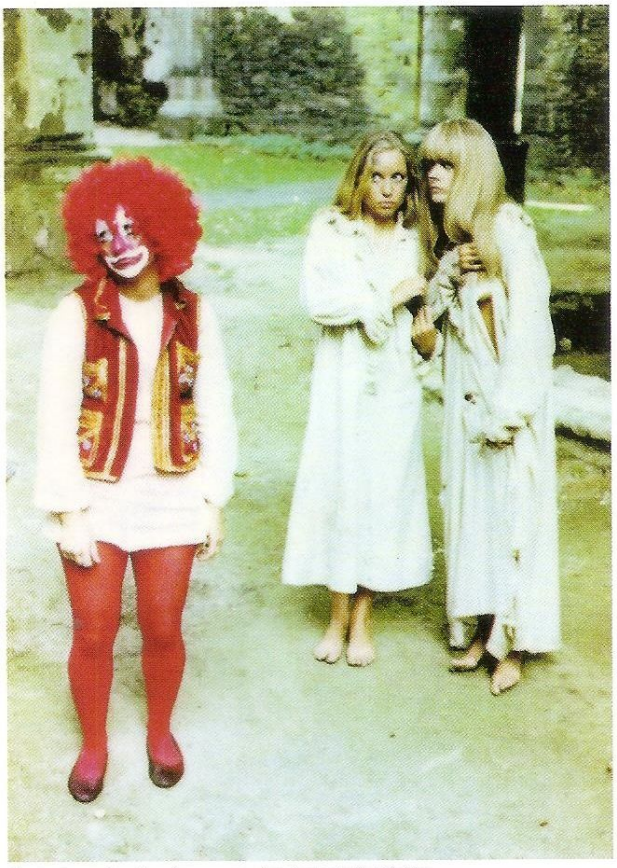
Patricia Hermenier



Lieva Lonne & Patricia Hermenier

Micha Zivomir & Lieva Lonne



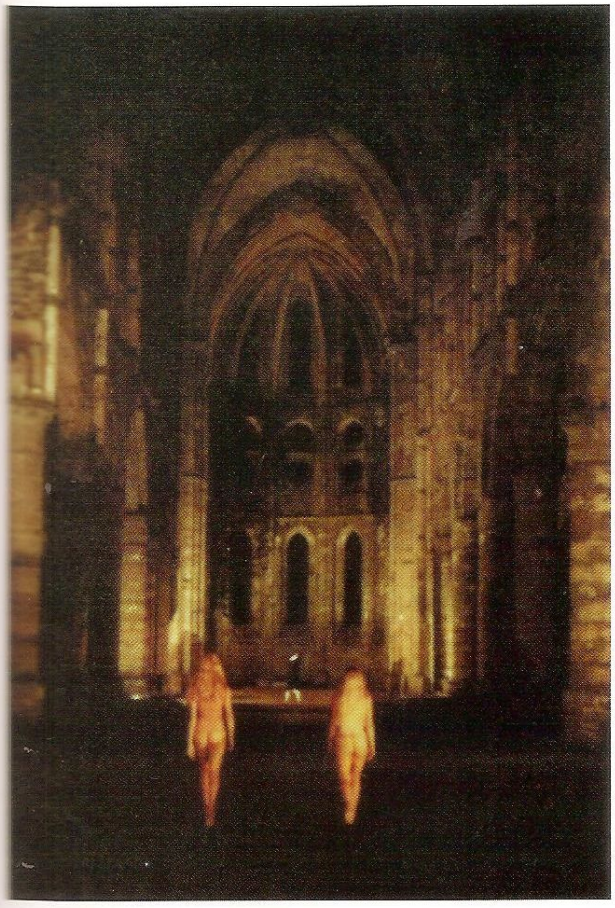


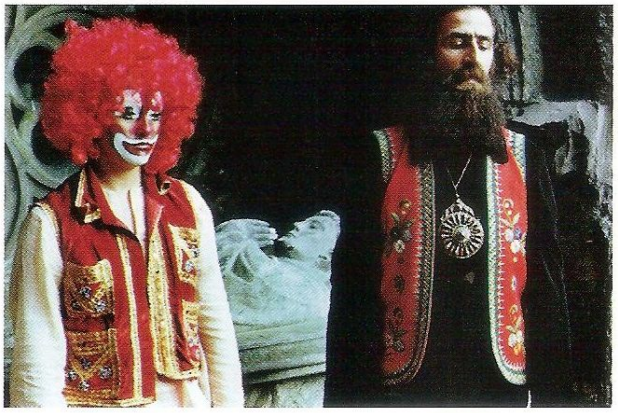
Mireille Dargent as the clown, a recurring image in Rollin's films.

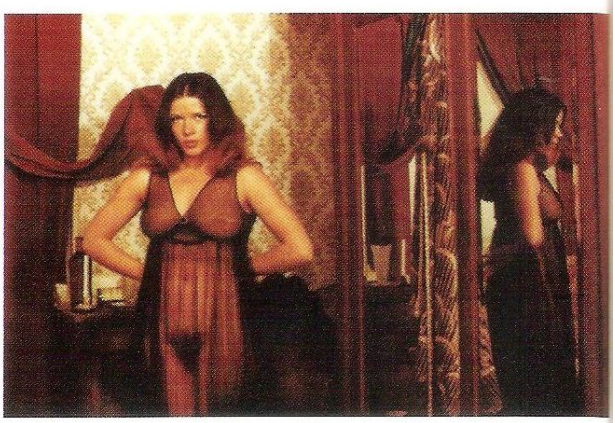
John Rico & Joëlle Cœur

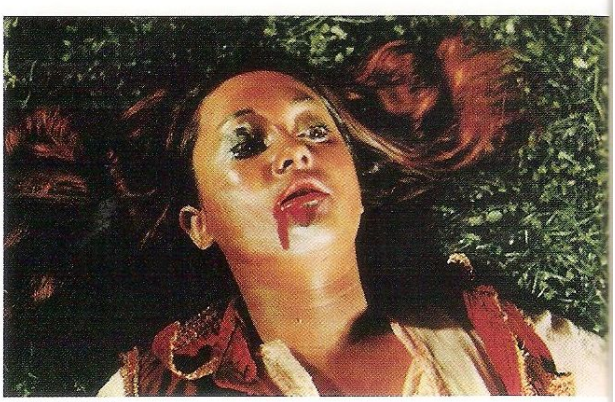
Louise Dhour

Joëlle Cœur

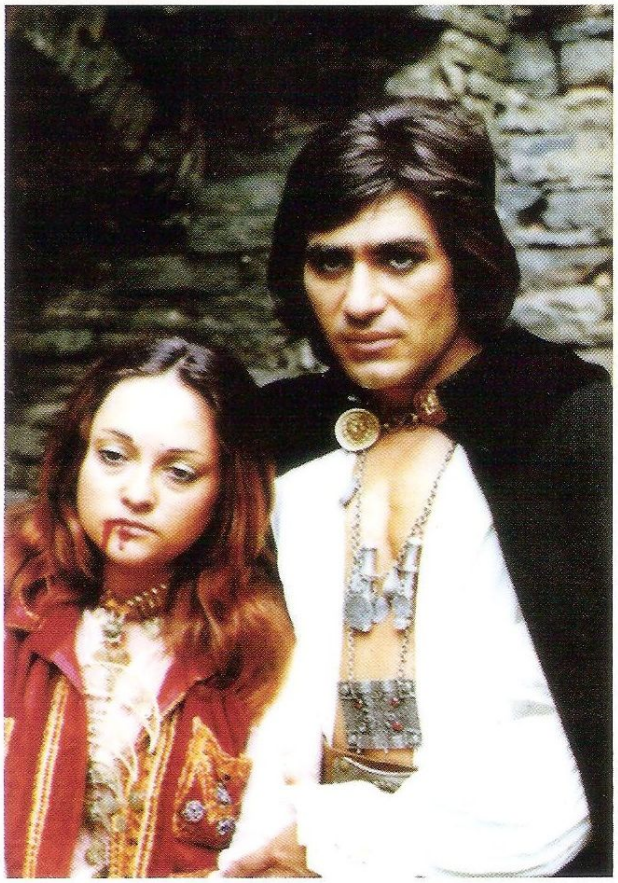


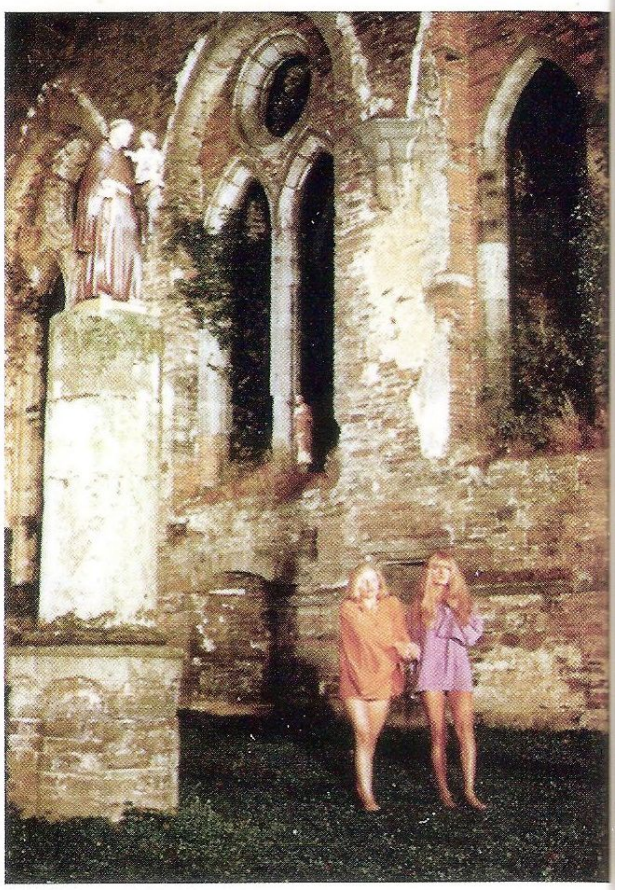




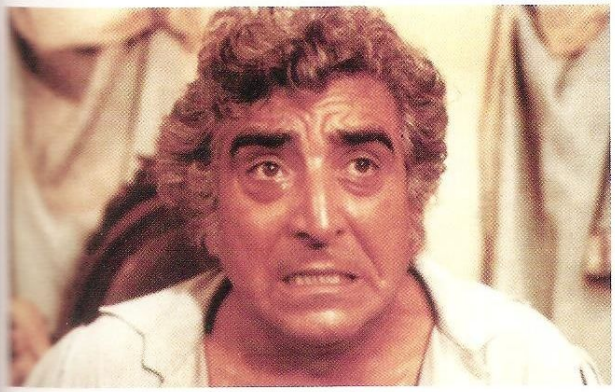


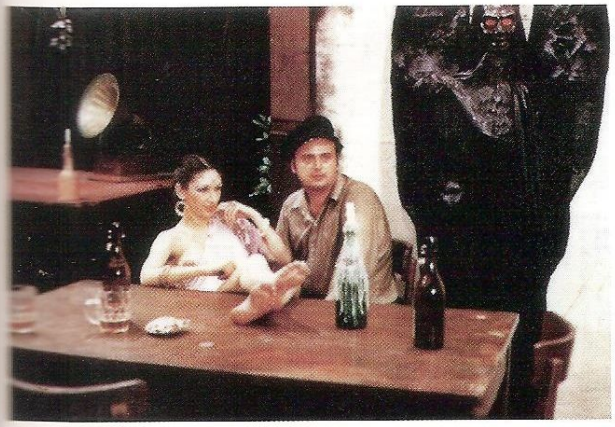
Mireille Dargent





Ilan Zimet





Jean Rollin & partner

1974

Lèvres de Sang

Lips of Blood

I think that LEVRES DE SANG is my best story because it recalls the world of childhood memory and first love. Upon seeing a photograph, a man suddenly relives an event that happened when he was twelve. Wandering and lost he met a beautiful young girl in the ruins of a château. In the morning she points him in the right direction. Today, as an adult, he wants to find this place again. After searching he finds the château and the girl who is unchanged.

It is the pursuit of passionate love that makes up the body of the film. Prejudice, family, moral order try to keep him from consummating his childhood love. The young girl turns out to be a hidden sister, because she is a vampire and therefore "different." He accepts her fate and the two solitary lovers are carried off by the tide concealed in a coffin.

We were about to begin shooting, a well-crafted script in hand, when trouble started. One of the producers declared bankruptcy, so we had to reduce our costs or stop the film. We had a shooting schedule of four weeks which I agreed to cut short by a week. It was almost unthinkable: entire scenes were axed or boiled down to two or three sentences. We had a different set-up every day. It was raining. Things had to be tightened. Three scenes were replaced with a long off-screen explanation by the mother. It was such a jumble that my assistant confessed that she didn't understand the film anymore. She was convinced that the result would be an incoherent mess that couldn't be saved through editing. But the story was firmly lodged in my head and the essential parts were saved.

LEVRES DE SANG is an uneven film but the tale of passionate and incestuous love remains. The flashback scene of "childhood memory," played by my twelve year old son, still has an emotional impact today. For once the professional critics were unanimous in their praise. But the film's release coincided with the first x-rated movies making mine a complete and utter failure.

My young producer and friend Jean-Marc Ghanassia decided to give up on this volatile business shortly thereafter. I was just happy to be making a film without having to worry myself with the production and finances. There were breath-taking locations: the ruins of the Château Gaillard where Marguerite de Bourgogne was strangled; the decimated old Belleville with its empty streets and boarded-up houses; the aquarium at the Trocadéro, a childhood favorite of mine. It's no longer around, but it was a magic place. I believe that the only existing record of it is in the scene from LEVRES DE SANG. I've written a long description of it in one of my books, LES DEMOISELLES DE L'ETRANGE.

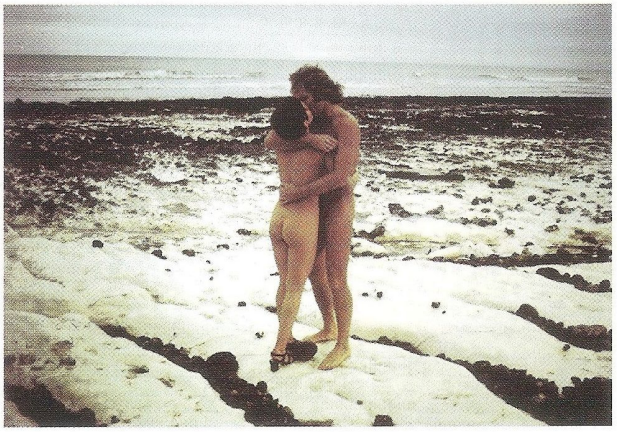
This is the first film where I was deliberately trying to elicit an emotion, the nostalgia of childhood. My vampire girl is innocent. The "horror" of vampirism dissolves before this magic encounter—an illustration of the themes of passionate love and surrealism.

The images of the cemetery, both during the opening credits, and when the vampire arises are among the closest to my ideal vision of cinema. I can not watch the opening scene without shivering: one can hear a woman breathing; wrapped in a white shroud she is locked up in the base of a crypt.

Jean Rollin

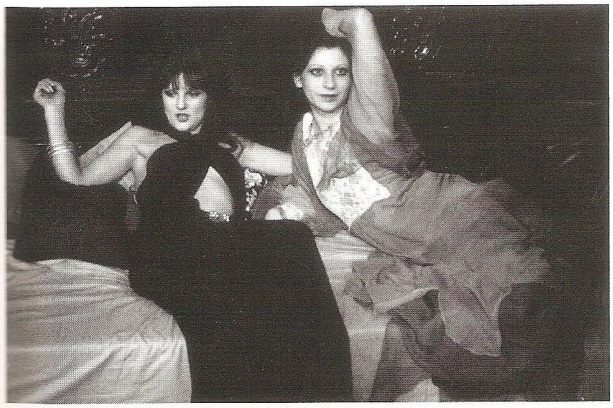
Annie Briand, subsequently as Annie Belle in numerous Italian productions.

Cathy & Pony Castel

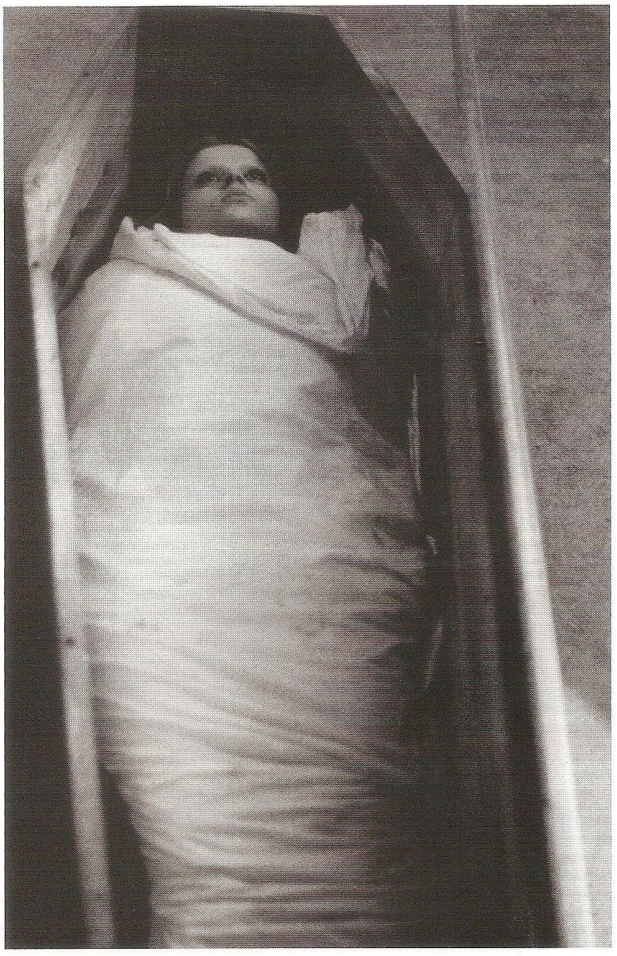


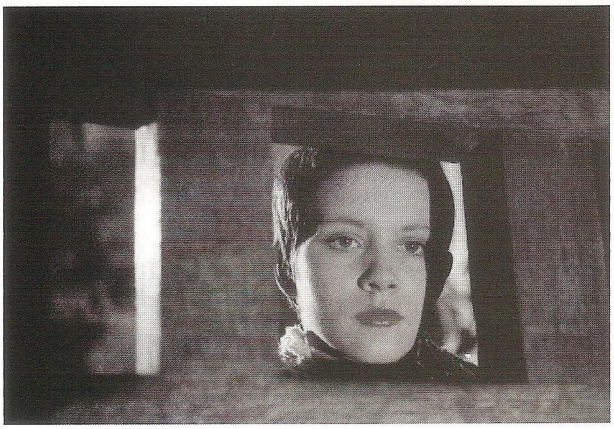
Jean-Loup Philippe

Hélène Maguin, Pony Castel, Anita Berglund & Cathy Castel.

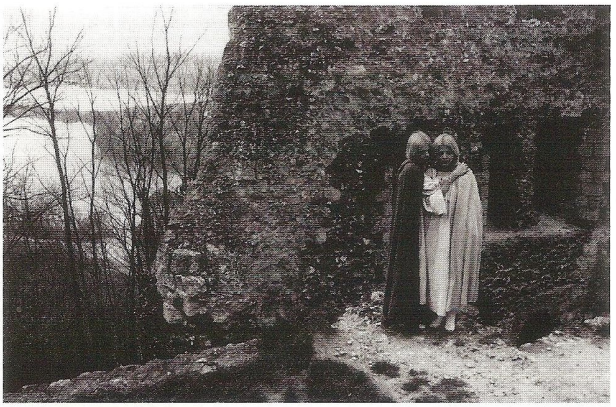


Claudine Becarie (l), one of the most popular French adult film stars of 70s, and Martine Grimaud.





Behind the scenes, on the left producer Jean-Marc Ghanassia.



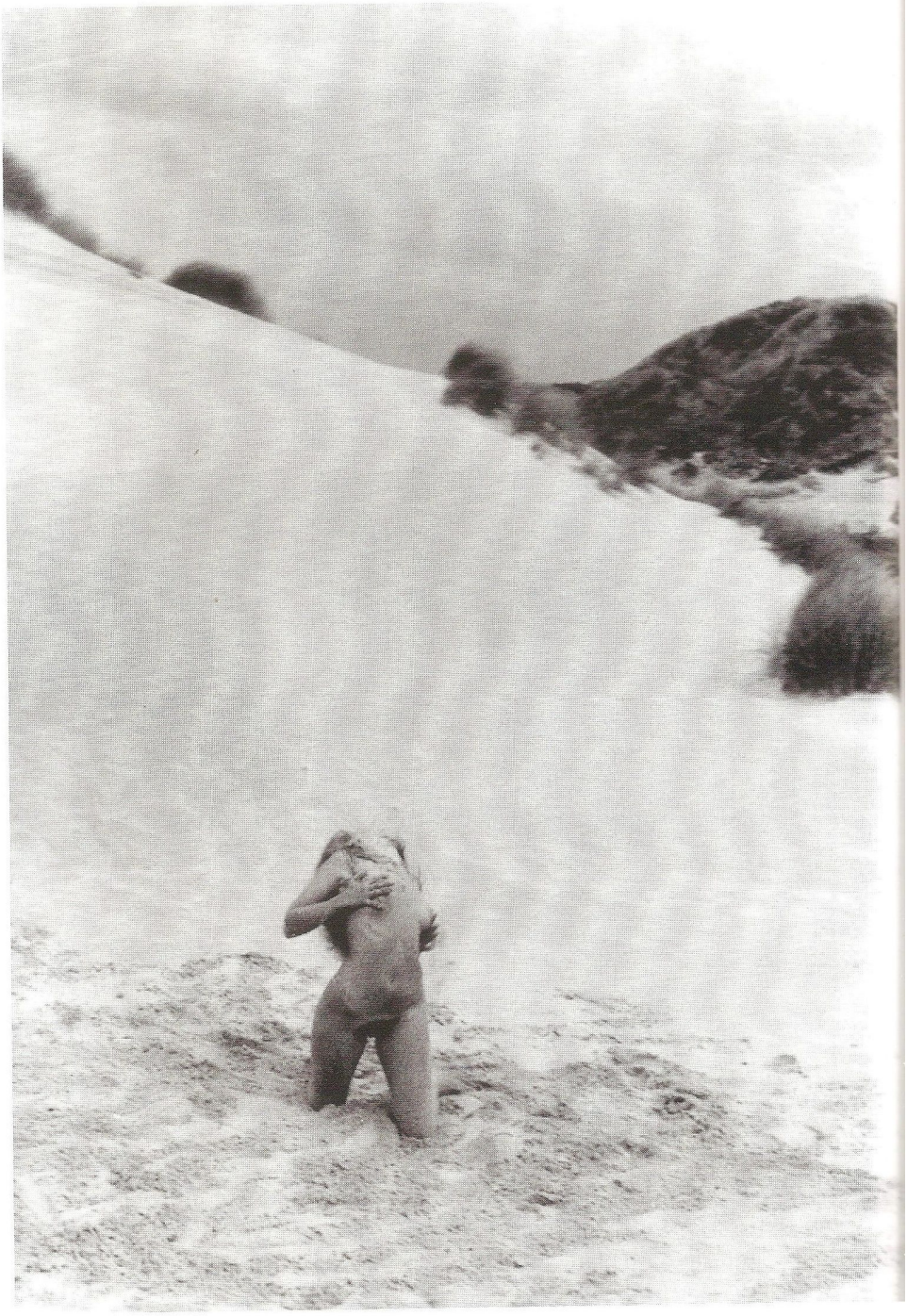
Sylvia Bourdon in a promo shot.

Natalie Perrey

1975

Phantasmes

The Seduction of Amy



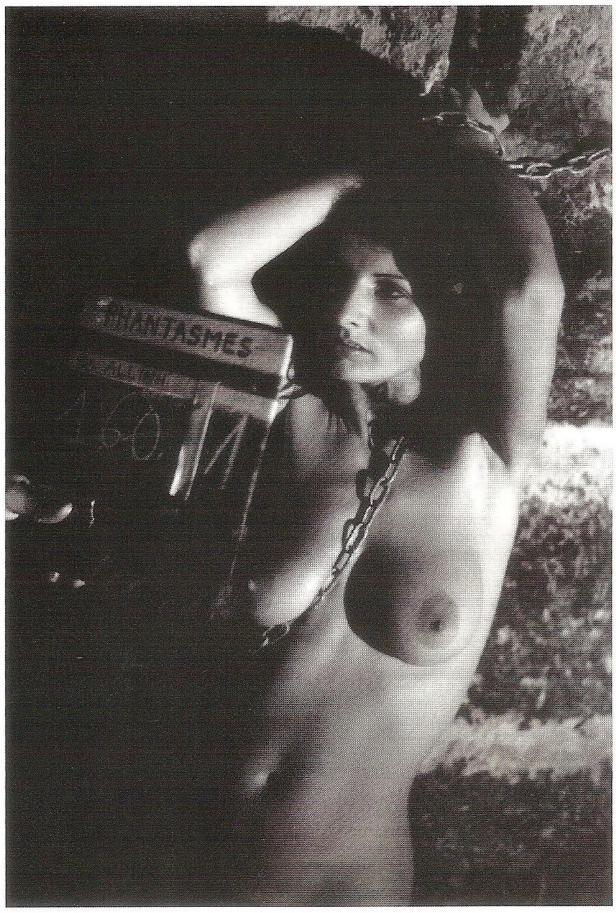
This film was made when the first x-rated movies were coming out. At the time I believed that it might be possible to shoot this type of stuff like a real movie, certainly with some X in it, but also with elaborate scenarios and the type of images that I like. This was my first and final attempt at serious x-rated films because fans of these kinds of films want X and nothing else. The viewers walked out. My film wasn't hard-core enough.

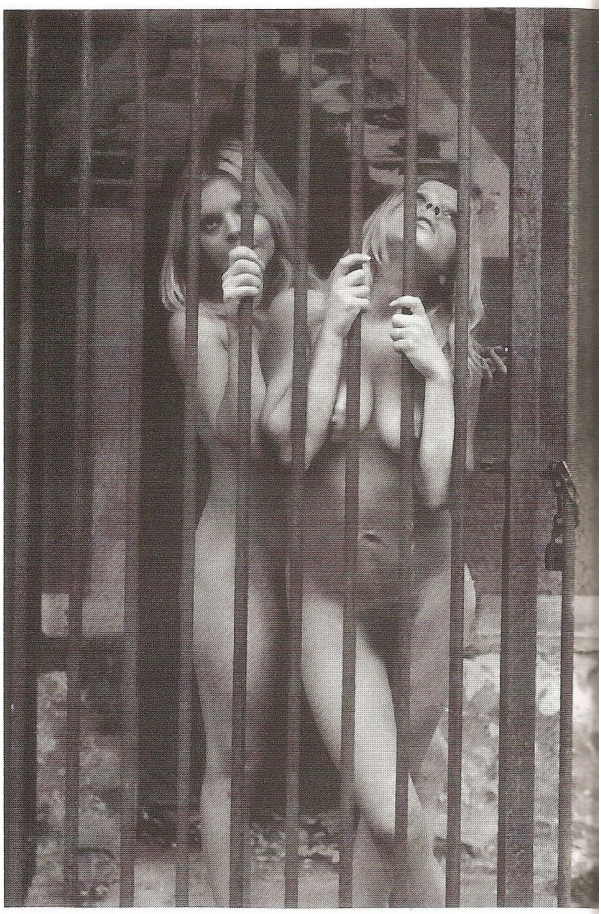
We had a château, interesting settings, a vaulted cellar close to Paris, good elements. Actors who were giving their best; and a beach in northern France for the finale; a very romantic scene in the sand dunes. We were staying with the Castel twins who had a little house nearby. Jean-Pierre Bouyxou played a boy-scout leader. I have fond memories of this film. Some images come to mind: the night scenes shot on a lake; Mylène Dantès submerging herself in the water, then splashing about in transparent veils in the style of "Rollin vampire women..." But unfortunately the X scenes interrupted the action and proved to me that with this type of handicap it was impossible to make a valid film. It's a shame: the story of a cursed Satan forced to kill the women he loves should have deserved a better fate.

Meanwhile the actors were giving their all, aware of what we were trying to accomplish. I must admit, at least at that time (the beginnings of x-rated films), the actors were completely willing to break with the status quo and work with a director on this type of production. All of them were happy to be in a film that, although x-rated, wasn't the kind of comedy where "the lady of the house is alone at home and the postman rings, etc." but rather a dramatic story. Most of the films in this genre were made to poke fun at sex. Treating it as a dramatic element, integrating sex into a story (as in EMPIRE OF THE SENSES for example) could have led to a kind of auteur cinema. But the morals of the time were still too bourgeois and no one dared to show sex scenes that didn't border on the ridiculous.

As if the makers of x-rated movies were ashamed of what they were doing and deliberately made fun of it. I don't share this attitude. Sex, pleasure or simply nudity are subjects that are just as serious as any others. It all depends on one's outlook. Unfortunately the most common attitude is that of a pig.

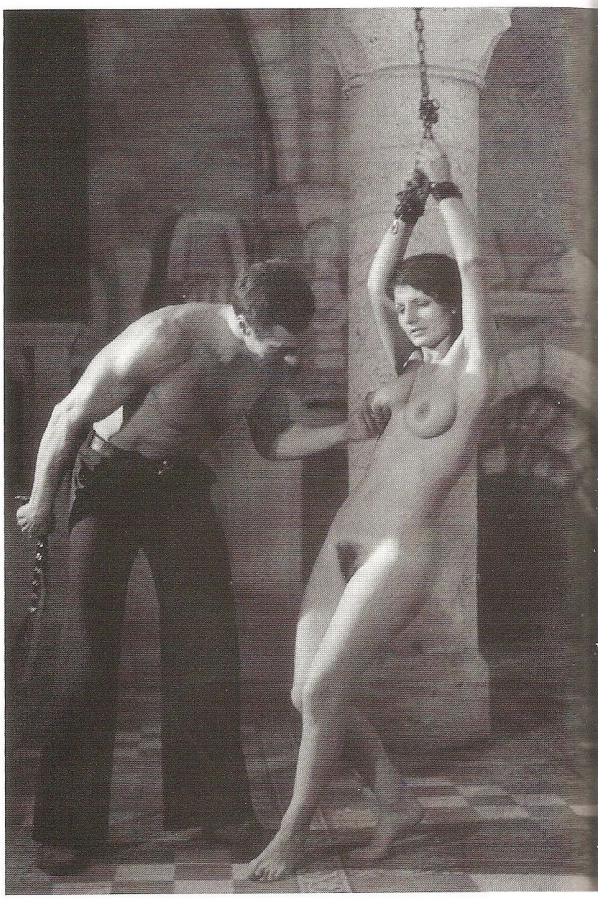
Jean Rollin





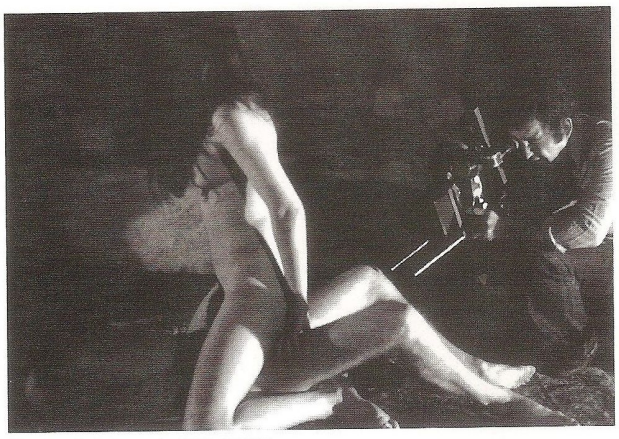
Marie-Pierre & Catherine Castel

Mylène d'Antès



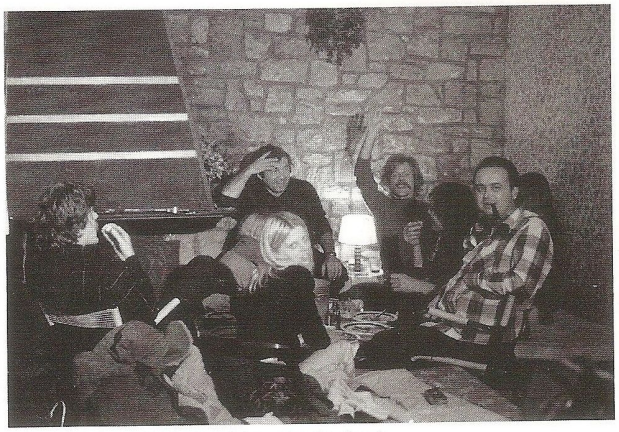
Greg Masters & partner

Rachel Mhas (left), an unkown actress, Mylène d'Antès, Marie-Pierre & Catherine Castel.

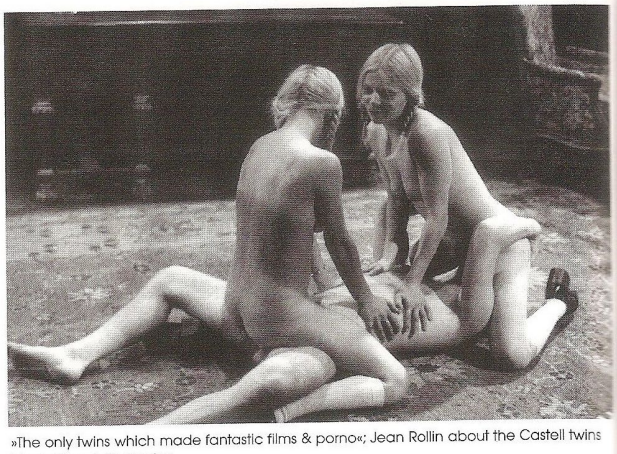


Director of photography Allinh at work.

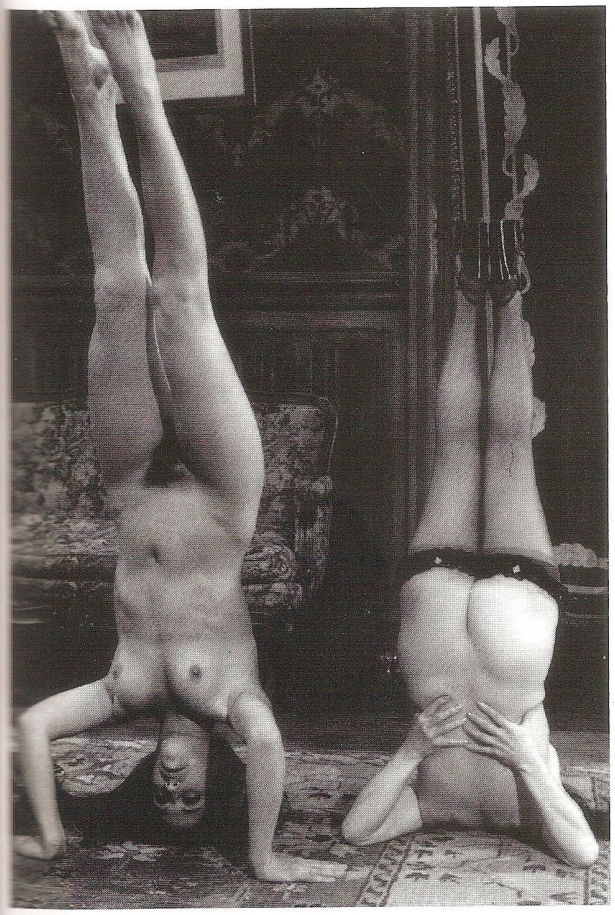
Marlène Miller

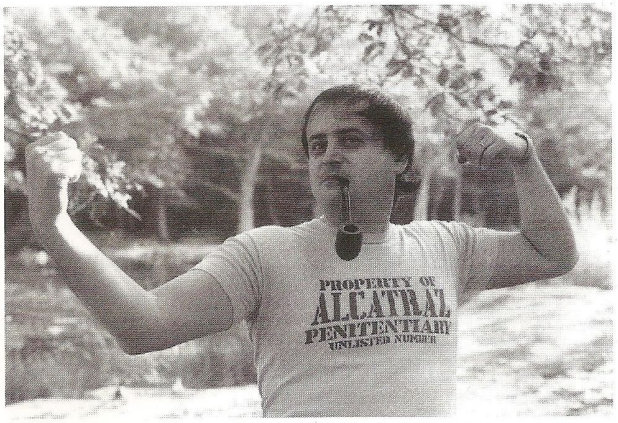


Rollin (right) and crew relaxing during a shooting break

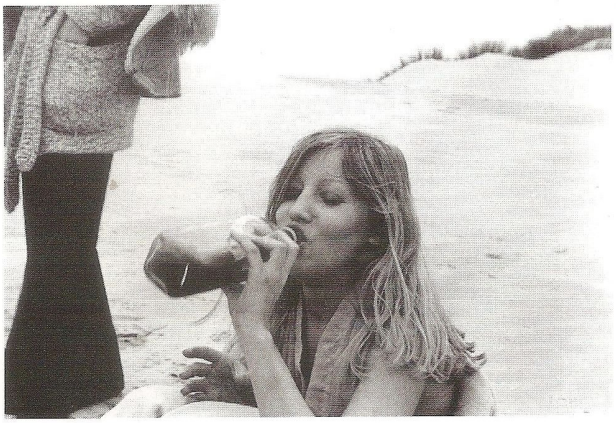


»The only twins which made fantastic films & porno«; Jean Rollin about the Castell twins Marie-Piere & Catherine.



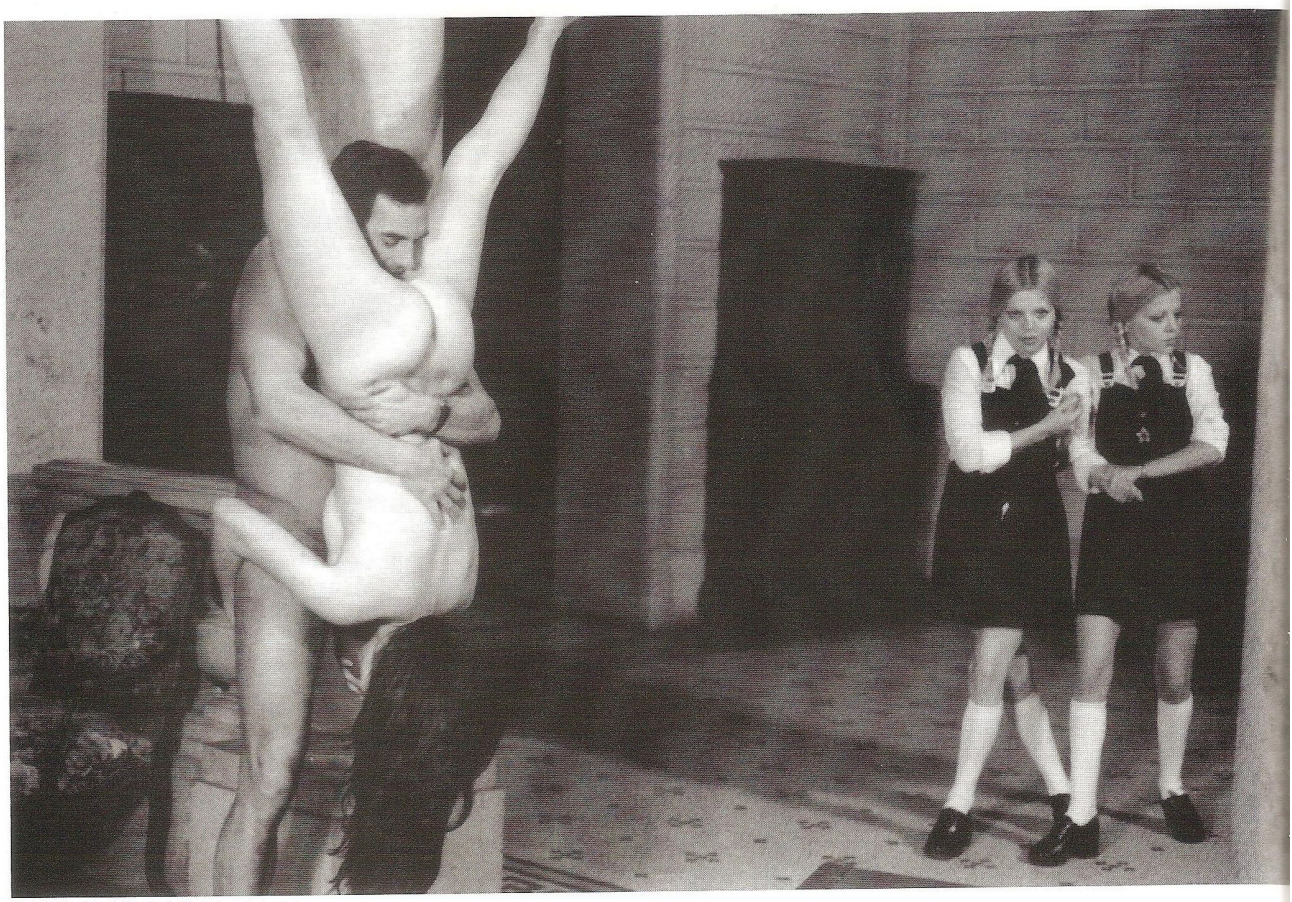


Rollin as the escaped prisoner, a tongue-in-cheek cameo appearance.



Mylène d'Antès during the shooting of the film's final sequence.

Claudia Zante & Jean Rollin behind the scenes.



Greg Masters & Rachel Mhas hard at work.

1978

Les Raisins de la Mort

Grapes of Death

My first traditional, almost conventional production. Solid finances, unusual for me, special effects by Italian experts, and well-known actors: Félix Marten, Serge Marquand. And the moving Marie-George Pascal. A complete crew under the guidance of great director of photography Claude Bécognée, sets by Causse Noire, varied locations, scenes at night.

Jean-Marc Ghanassia, my field co-producer was appalled by my work habits. He aspired to be a director, and for him a scene had to be shot from many angles; the classic "long shot, medium shot and close-up." It scared him to see me do one take per scene without taking any other angles. But I knew what I wanted. For Jean-Marc a film comes together during the editing process where one can choose from a number of different shots. For me a film is conceived according to my vision of the moment, that's to say what I am looking for materializes during the shoot. This was the first film where I didn't use a shooting script.

It was a hard film to do because of the Siberian cold. More commercial than my other films, LES RAISINS was fashioned after the disaster movies that were en vogue at the time: TOWERING INFERNO, THE POSEIDON ADVENTURE. A group of survivors, moving about, their two leaders arguing whether to turn left or right. In this manner they are wandering through a region of madness. As anyone can see this film has nothing to do with NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, as has been foolishly suggested. That film is based on the premise of being locked up, of claustrophobia. The finale of LES RAISINS is deliberately tragic, the remaining survivor "going to the other side." That's to say going mad and letting her lover's blood run down over her face.

I wanted to get away from the usual zombie fare. The zombies in RAISINS have retained their consciousness. They suffer because of what they are. So when decapitating the little blind girl that he has nailed to his door, Paul Bisciglia screams, "Je t'aime!" That's a key scene in the movie. Here the living dead show emotions, unlike in other movies where they are more dead than alive.

For once a film of mine received a very positive review in "France-Soir." On the other hand there was a particularly stupid article by a certain Riou who thought that I deserved to be publicly flogged. He captioned a photo showing Serge Montand killing a girl with a pitch fork by saying that the murder was committed with a spade.

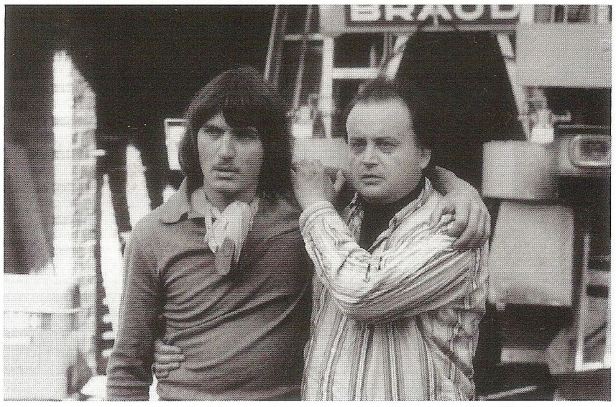
The scene where Marie-George takes refuge on a farm that's becoming increasingly strange is also among the film's best. There is a growing sense of unease that culminates in the discovery of a woman's body with a slit throat. Serge Marquand gives a striking performance in that scene. Marie-George seemed to be descending deeper into madness the further she went into the nightmarish Cévennes mountains.

It has often been written that LES RAISINS was undoubtedly the first French gore film. Is it a gore film? I am not so sure. Each scene of violence is integrated into the story. It is never gratuitous. It is always accompanied by an emotion. The blood is not splattering for fun or to show of the latest technical gimmicks. In this film the horror is more "intellectual." The same goes for my other gore film LA MORTE VIVANTE, but in a slightly different spirit.

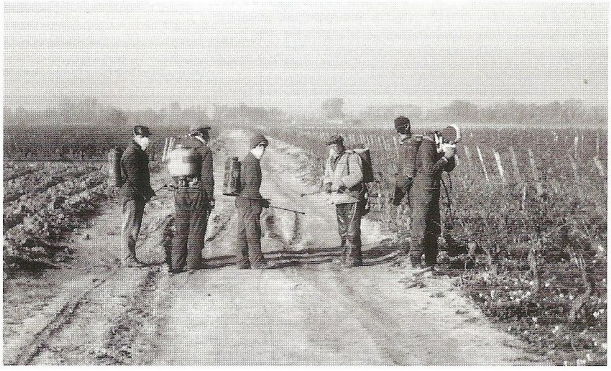
Jean Rollin

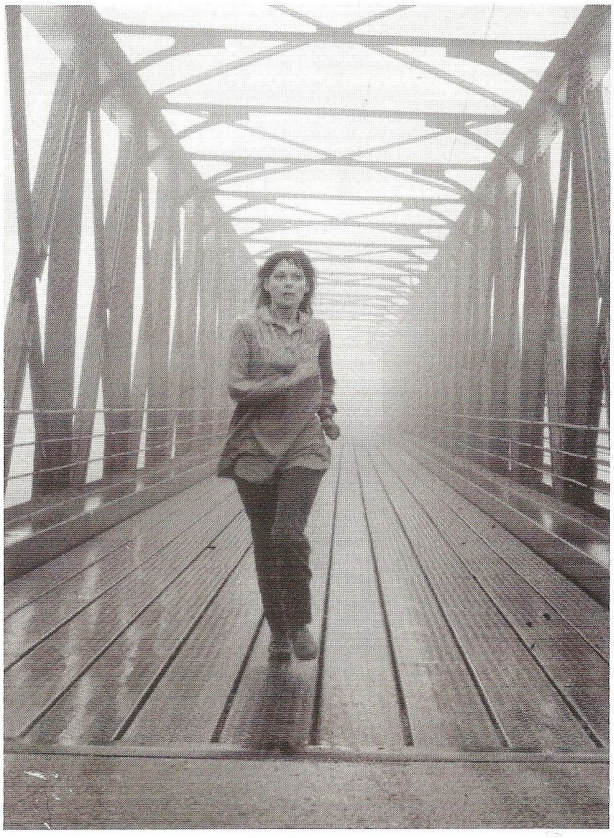
Marie-Georges Pascal & Évelyne Thomas

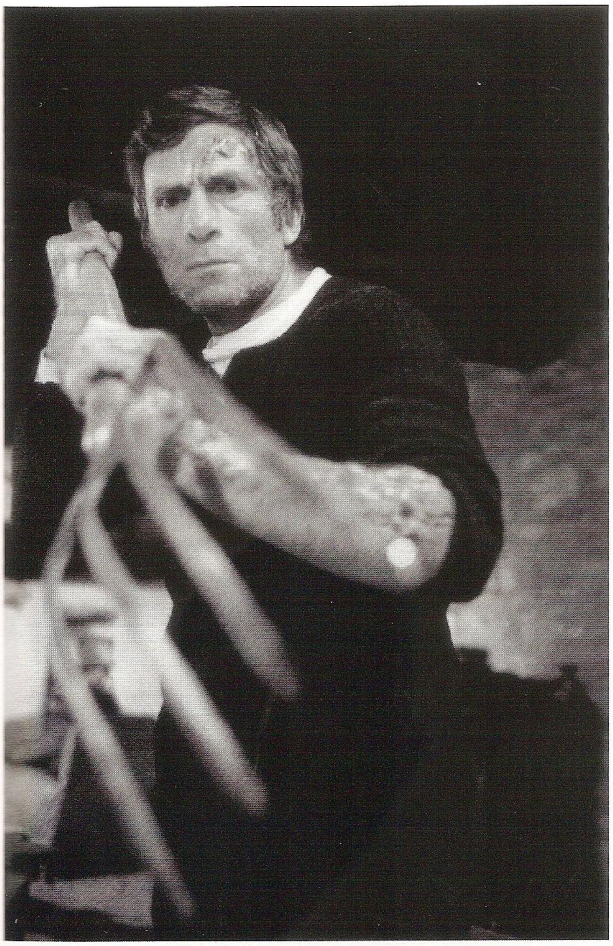
Marie-Georges Pascal



Françoise Pascal, the infected farm worker, and Jean Rollin in one of the film's early scenes.



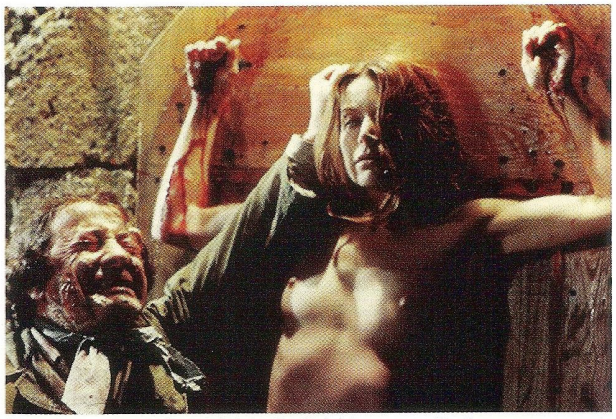




Serge Marquant

Brigitte Lahaie, the »nordic godess« in her first non-adult film after having collaborated with Rollin in VIBRATION SENSUELLES.

Mirella Rancelot


Paul Bisciglia & Mirella Rancelot during the film's infamous crucification scene.

Jean Rollin testing the make-up effect by Alfredo Tibéri (right).

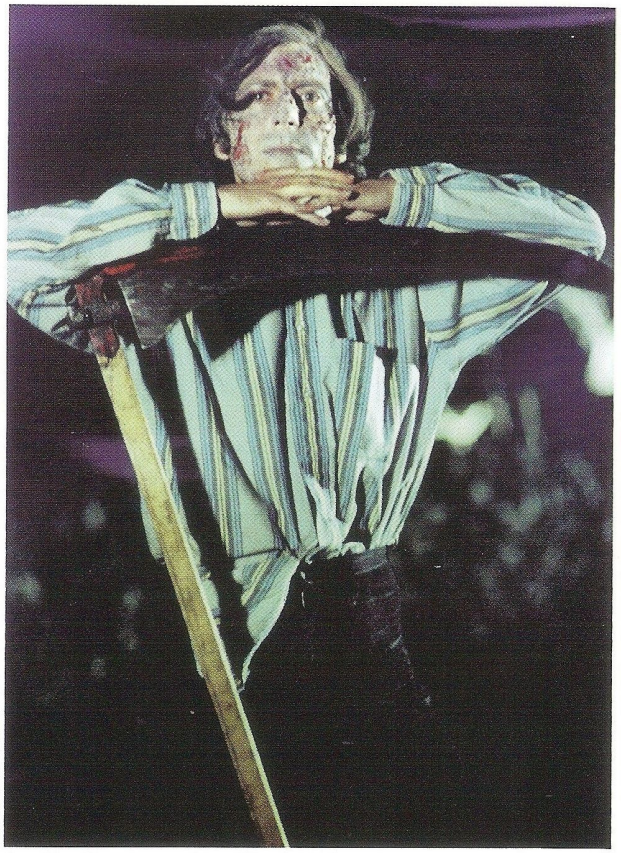
Marie-Georges Pascal & Félix Marten

Jean-Marc Ghanassia (left sitting), Jean Rollin and director of photography Claude Bécogné.

Mirella Rancelot

Behind the scenes

Brigitte Lahaie



Jean-Pierre Bouyxou, genre journalist and co-author of the film's script.

Rollin instructing Serge Marquant.

Make-up boy Raphael Monjiu

Marie-Georges Pascal & Michel Herval.

1979

Fascination

Fascination

A strange story with FASCINATION. My co-producer wanted us to make a small, sexy, inexpensive film. I suggested that we could make a truly fantastic film for the same price. I was going to be responsible for any cost overruns. He accepted my proposal and I wrote the script with a particular location in mind. A striking château, with a park, and even a small abattoir in a neighboring village. Two weeks of shooting, a handful of period costumes rented or made by Natalie Perrey, and Brigitte Lahaie in an very beautiful role. She was never more beautiful and fresh wearing turn-of-the-century dresses that suited her perfectly. After many x-films, she was completely at ease in her first straight leading role. Reassured and relaxed thanks to the magic performed by my make-up artist Eric Pierre, she passed her first test as a real actor.

It was a simple and even classic story, vaguely inspired by the short story "Le verre de sang" by Jean Lorrain.

We managed to finish shooting within two weeks. I put some very beautiful images into the film. I find the scene during the opening credits, with the two young women in long dresses dancing on the drawbridge to the sound of an old wind-up phonograph, one of the strangest that I ever shot. By the same token the shot of hands leafing through an old book in the opening scene is reminiscent of certain old films, just like the opening credits of LES DEMONIAQUES recall old pirate films. The polished photo of Georgie Fromentin accentuates the precious and old-fashioned look of the film.

The film didn't do well in Paris, but for once it was hailed by the reviewers and received acclaim at different film festivals. For a long time it was considered my best film.

Once again there was no shooting script, technical support or tracking. Nothing of the kind. And yet I find that the production was not marred by this and that the setting was used to maximum effect. The staging simply came to me, and I would have liked to continue shooting scenes for a long time, just to see my characters move around in the château.

As usual I added some personal images to the film: the young woman in white in the abattoir; the credits; the dovecote that was to resurface in LA MORTE VIVANTE; Brigitte with a scythe for the poster; the young scoundrel dancing blindfolded; the young women toying with the daggers; and above all the very polished frames.

I like having my actors move about slowly, inside or out, so that they blend into the set. I know that this technique gets on many people's nerves. But if Sergio Leone can spend a quarter of an hour showing people waiting for a train, why can't I have a girl meandering through a fantastic château with a candelabra in one hand (LA VAMPIRE NUE) or show a female clown slowly descending an immense staircase (LES DEMONIAQUES)?

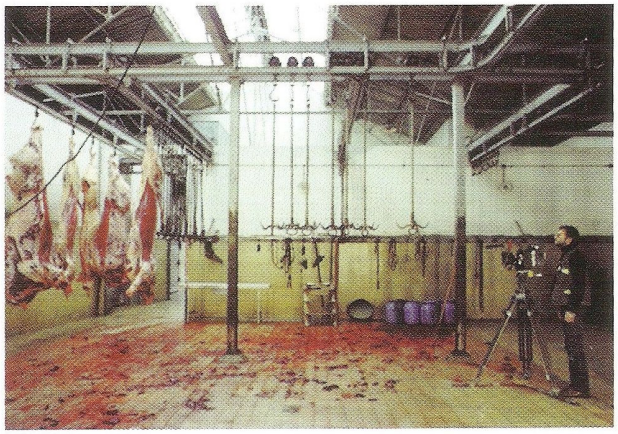
The finale of FASCINATION links back to the beginning: the bridge once again serves as a meeting place for the two murderesses and their accomplices who rejoin each other with the sentence, "Comme tu es belle, avec son sang sur ta bouche." ("How beautiful you are with his blood on your mouth.")

A homage to vampirism.

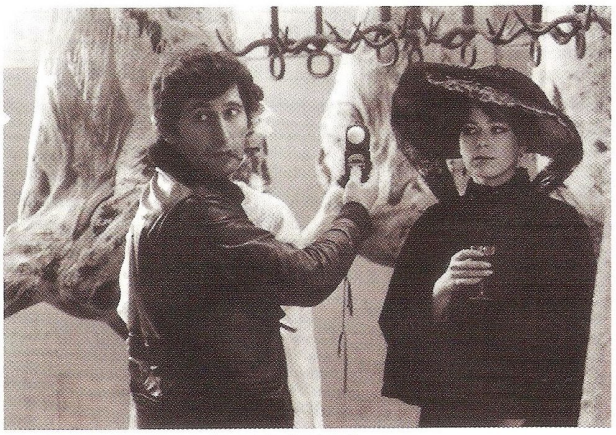
Jean Rollin

The savagely beautiful opening sequence in Rollin's predatory vampire flic FASCINATION.

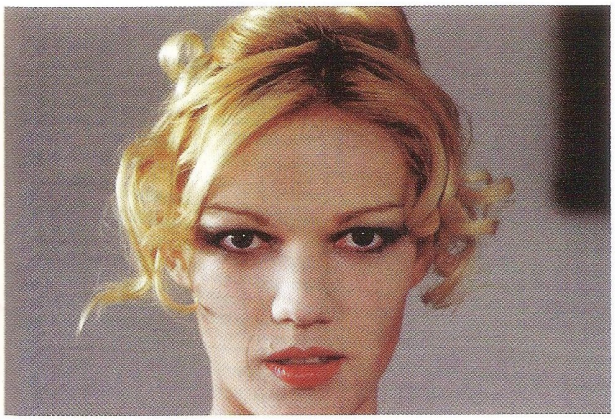
Franka Maï & Brigitte Lahaie

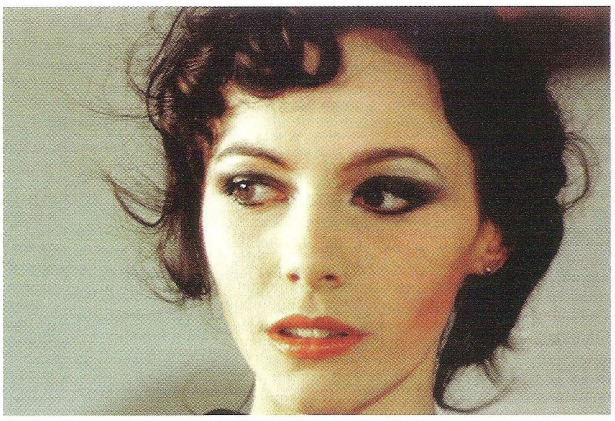


Lensing the opening scene.

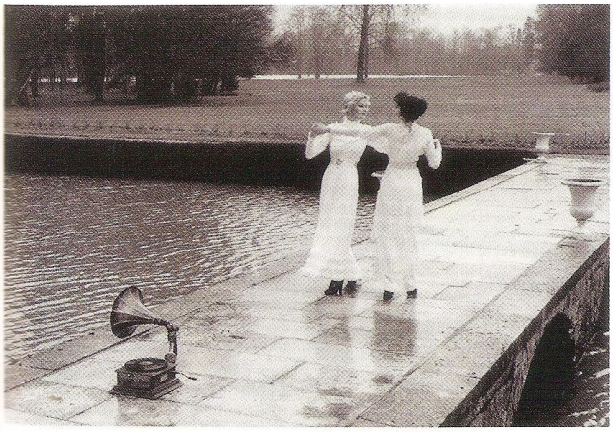


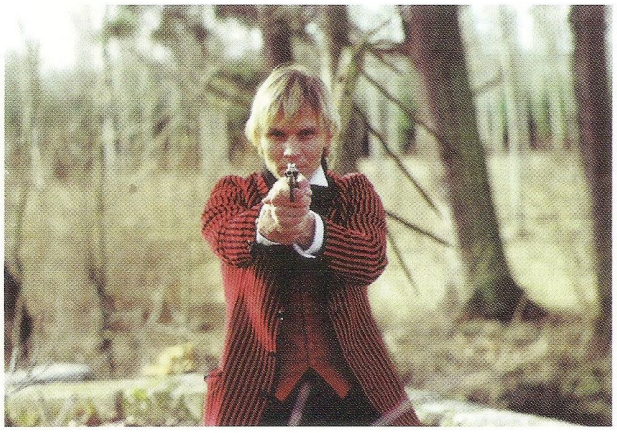
Director of photography Georges Fromentin at work.



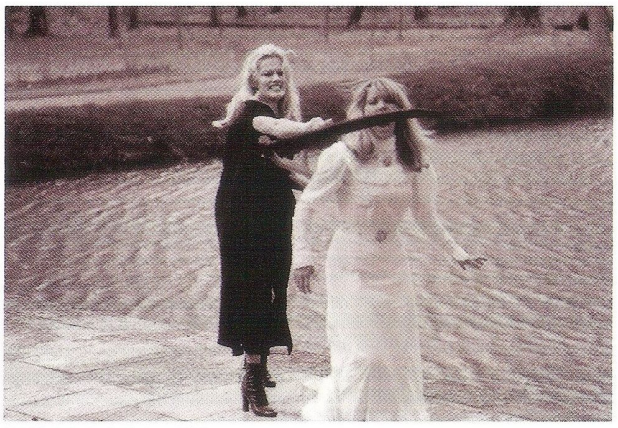


Franka Maï, Brigitte Lahaie, an unkown actress, Fanny Magier & Sophie Noël.

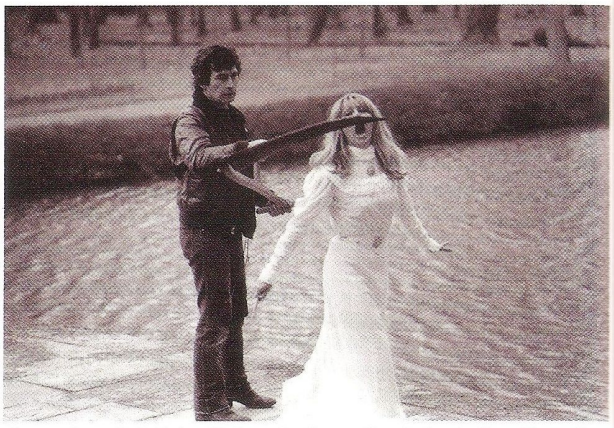




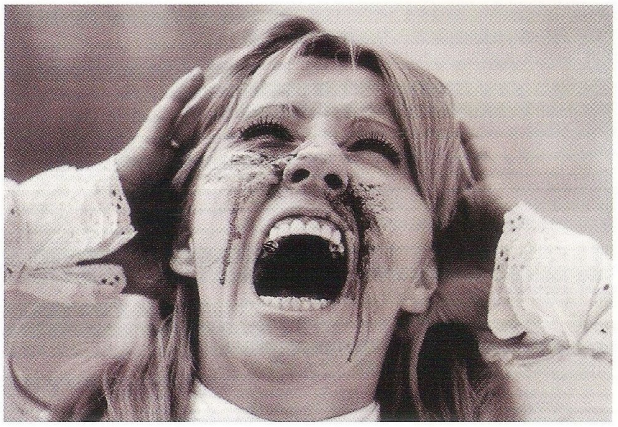
Jean-Marie Lemaire



Brigitte Lahaie & Myriam Watteau.



Georges Fromentin & Myriam Watteau checking positions for the shooting of the scythe sequence.



Myriam Watteau

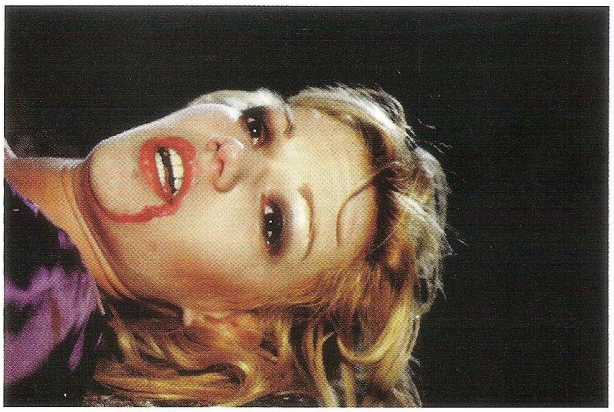
Myriam Watteau & Jean Rollin joking during a shooting break.

Brigitte Lahaie as the film's scythe wielding Angel of Death.

The lethal couple of FASCINATION: Brigitte Lahaie & Franka Maï.

Jean-Marie Lemaire.

Muriel Montosse in one of her first screen appearances during the films's blood drenched climax.



1980

La Nuit des Traquées

The Night of the Hunted

The subject matter for this film was much too ambitious for the little time and budget that we had. There were as usual some personal images: the naked girl at night bathed in the headlights of a car; the couple standing in front of the tower who all of a sudden start to dance for no good reason. And the pulp phrasing, "You won't escape the black tower." ("Vous n'échapperez pas a la tour noire.") But the whole thing is too skimpy. There are strong scenes that would have merited greater development: the people crammed in the hallway whose brains die like the deprogrammed computer in "2001." Natalie Perrey in a very moving scene that gave the film its true meaning; the sequence where Brigitte Lahaie feeds her incapacitated companion with a little spoon; the scene where Brigitte tumbles into insanity; the ending on the abandoned bridge... All those ideas were valid, but with barely ten days of shooting it was impossible to organize them properly. The film is therefore a little trite and gives the impression of a series of ideas that weren't followed up on.

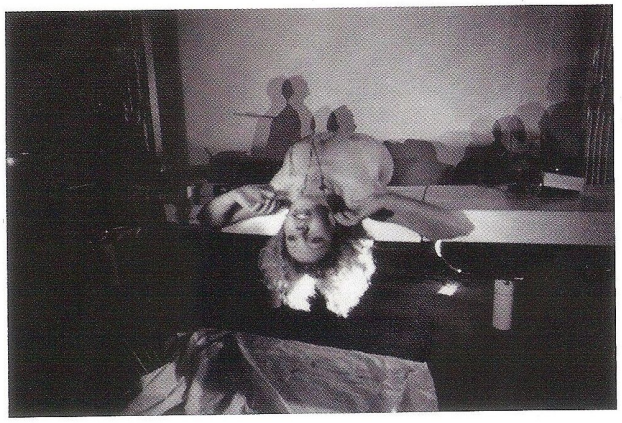
Of course the people locked up in the train cars, killed by strange nurses; the bodies burnt in the gas ovens are specific allusions to real-life events. These people who are deprived by and by of their personalities, until they don't know anymore who they are or where they are and who above all don't understand why they are being persecuted, crammed up and destroyed, are likewise specific evocations. Some German viewers, as I remember, saw the film as a reference to the experiences of inmates subjected to sensory deprivation in the high security detention facility at Stammheim. It is possible that I was unconsciously influenced by certain events, since the film was shot at the time of the assassination of the surviving members of the Baader group. But my only conscious allusion was that of the Holocaust.

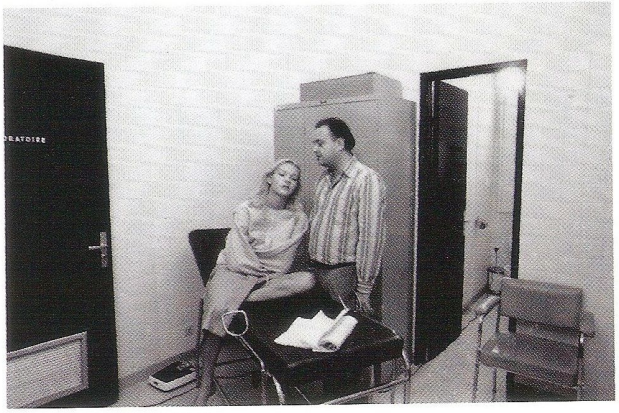
When I see this film I feel a sense of unease. As if the film contains the seed of a great film that was never actually realized.

At the time I was rebellious. I was particularly bothered by the disdain that the mainstream movie people displayed towards their porno colleagues. Also, I had complete freedom in making NUIT DES TRAQUEES (within the limits of the budget naturally; the producer never came to the set). I deliberately hired actors from x-rated films who deserved it: Brigitte Lahaie who had already proved herself, but also Alain Plumey, Rachel Mhas and, above all, Cathy Greiner who worked a long time on her touching scene where she is fed by Brigitte with a small spoon. The film didn't do very well. It was booed at the Festival in Sitges, but applauded at the festival in Trieste. I had little control over the complete production and couldn't prevent the producers from inserting two or three short sex scenes that were somewhere between heavy soft core and light hard core. They also released the film under a different title. If I ever have the means I am going to remake it one day. Scenes like the "hallway of insanity" where Brigitte discovers that all inmates are victims of radiation poisoning who are either losing their memory or their sense of balance and coordination—could be developed further. But parts of the film have earned me sincere compliments from viewers who were watching "between the lines" or looking beyond the fragmented images for what might have been.

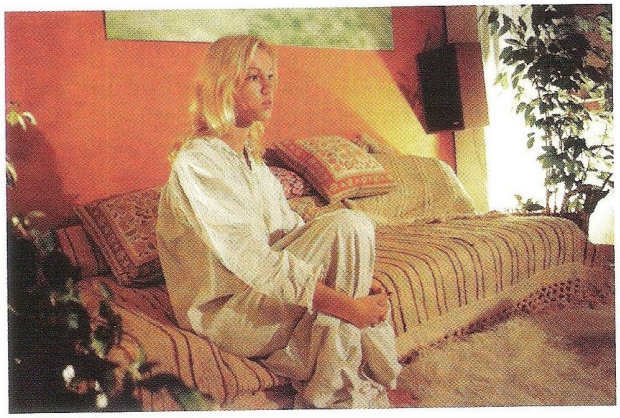
Jean Rollin

Brigitte Lahaie & Dominique Journet, the two lovers with the destroyed brains in the sterile, cold environment of Rollin's apocalyptic LA NUIT DES TRAQUÉES.

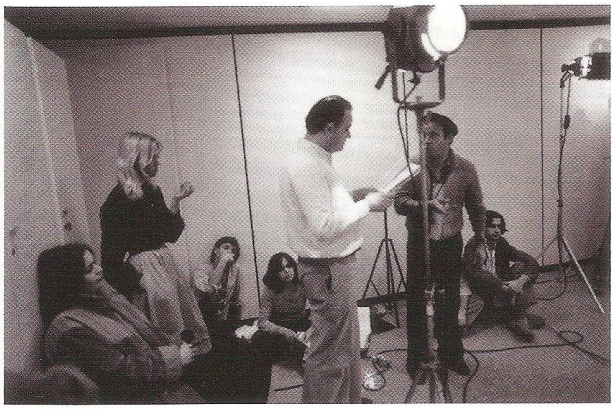




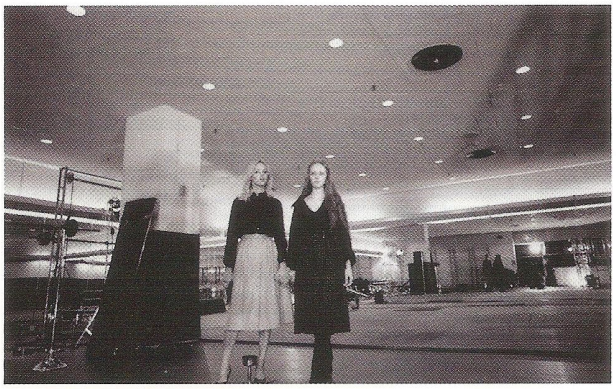
Rollin instructing Brigitte Lahaie.



Brigitte Lahaie.



Rollin and crew behind the scenes.



Dominique Journet.

1981

Les Échappées

The Escapers

LES ÉCHAPPÉES or LES PAUMEES aka FUGUE MINEURE is in a class by itself. It was never released theatrically, only on video.
The film is a bit of a disaster. The producers had wanted me to make a thriller for a change and work with a professional scriptwriter who was supposed to "relieve me of my tics and mannerisms." I complied and they found me a writer to rework my original script.
He toiled on it for so long that his text didn't arrive until a few days before filming began.
It was an incredible mess. All the clichés and platitudes of melodrama were thrown into the story and the dialogue. It was full of never-ending dialogues that one might to call "fake Prévert." I was appalled. It added up to a film more than three hours long. It had to be trimmed, edited, and rewritten. So I was working with two scripts in hand: his (enormous and weighty) and mine where I had fleshed out certain images and ideas.
The result was a strange film that was badly mastered. But certain scenes emerged: the opening in the institution for problem children; the relationship between the two fugitives that rings true at moments; the carnival booth in the middle of railroad tracks, trains passing in the background; the scenes with Louise Dhour; the death of Mariane Vallio at the port of Le Havre... And the very strange Laurence Dubas.
There are also a few scenes at a car junkyard that I like. But all of these are just fragments. The film as a whole is uneven. Those who know my cinema well could almost detect what's from the original script (mine) and what's from the rewrite.
I liked the ending (one of the fugitives walks off carrying the body of the other) and I am certainly going to use it again some day. (I failed to in LES DEUX ORPHELINES VAMPIRES.)
Poor dropouts (paumées). I regret that this film was a failure because of the actors we had in it and because it could have been an interesting project: my first film that wasn't fantastic.

Jean Rollin

Laurence Dubas & Christiane Coppé

Laurence Dubas & Christiane Coppé

Marianne Vallo

Jean-Louis Fortuit & Christiane Coppè

1982

La Morte Vivante

The Living Dead Girl

The producers wanted another zombie story. I got around it by turning the living dead into a sort of vampire woman. And by including the theme of childhood memories that I had slipped in a few times previously (for example in LEVRES DE SANG). The flash-backs are longer than in LEVRES DE SANG and the scenes with the two little girls, and particularly the blood oath, are very polished. The relationship between the two old childhood friends is full of tenderness, as are the last words exchanged before the sequence of ultimate horror in the final scene. Françoise Blanchard had internalized her character perfectly and was playing with great conviction. Marina Pierro is often intense and dramatic. Some friends of mine were also in the film: Alain Petit, Jean-Pierre Bouyxou...

The grave robbers in the beginning were inspired by the old Universal movie FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLFMAN, a picture that made a great impression on me as a child. It's more of a tribute than plagiarism, just like Brigitte Lahaie's scene with her dogs in LES RAISINS is a direct homage to Mario Bava's BLACK SUNDAY (LA MASCHERA DEL DEMONIO).

For me the strongest scene is when the living dead woman returns to her place of childhood, gradually recovering her faded memory, feeling her childhood come back to her. She finds her old toys, her rocking horse, these objects floating back into her life like air being pumped back into the lungs of a drowned person receiving artificial resuscitation. The climax is reached when, still unable to speak, she phones her friend and makes her understand that she has returned. I don't know if this scene was successful, but Philippe D'Aram understood it very well; his music is moving, just as it would be in PERDUES DANS NEW YORK, where the memories of childhood blend with the memories of youth.

The young Benoît Lestang and his buddies took care of the gore FX. It was their first professional assignment. They kept shop in a bathroom and slept there amongst their gadgets. Their work was stunning. For the finale they had to blow into a tube to make the blood splash when Françoise devours her companion. While we were working on this scene a small bat landed on the steps where blood had been spilled. We got as close as possible and the scene with the bat is included in the film so as to say that this MORTE VIVANTE is a sort of vampire film.

The problems started after the filming: the co-producer jumped ship leaving me with unpaid lab bills. The lab itself filed for bankruptcy. And to top it off the remaining co-producer went broke. I was left, saddled with all the debt. It took me several years to pay everything back. To get myself out of this mess I needed to make a film that would earn a little money and get the lab back on track.

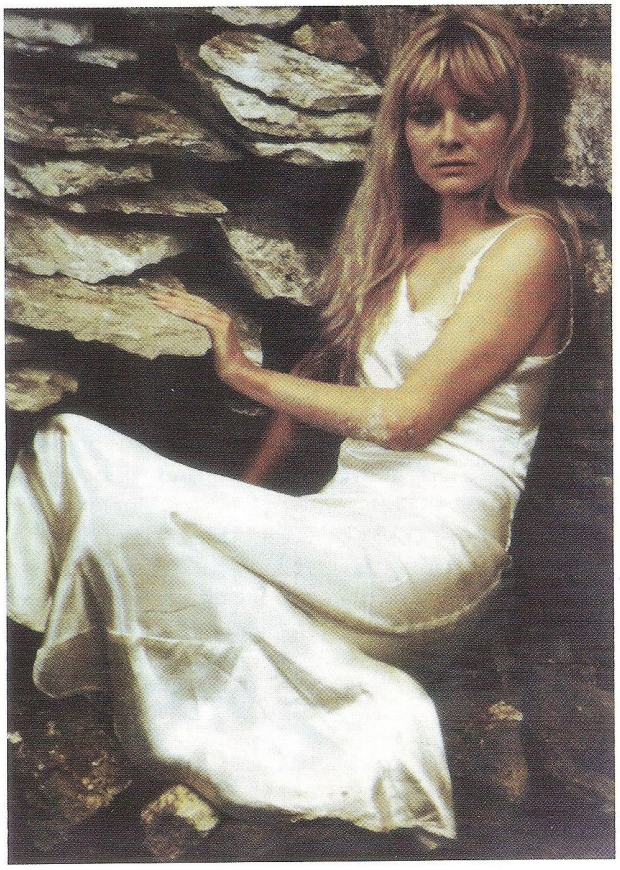
André Samarcq was the one to propose a little deal: he had been to Bangkok on vacation and wanted to make use of several scenes he had shot there with his amateur's camera. I came up with the title LES TROTTOIRS DE BANKOK and the film was made. Thanks to BANKOK Films ABC is still in existence.

LA MORTE VIVANTE received the Special Audience Price at the Fantafestival in Rome. The great friendship I feel for its director Adriano Pintaldi dates back to this time.

Jean Rollin

Françoise Blanchard, the resurrected girl trapped between the world of the living and the dead.

Françoise Blanchard and French genre specialist Alain Petit.

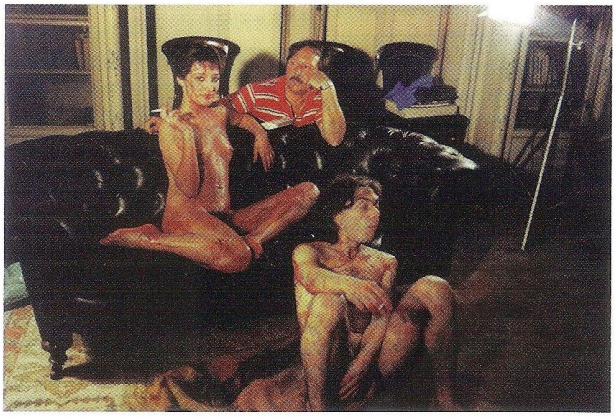


The living dead girl and her child remembrances, a romantic scene in Rollin's melange of his typical motives and commercial horror cinema.

Jean Rollin posing with his living dead girl.

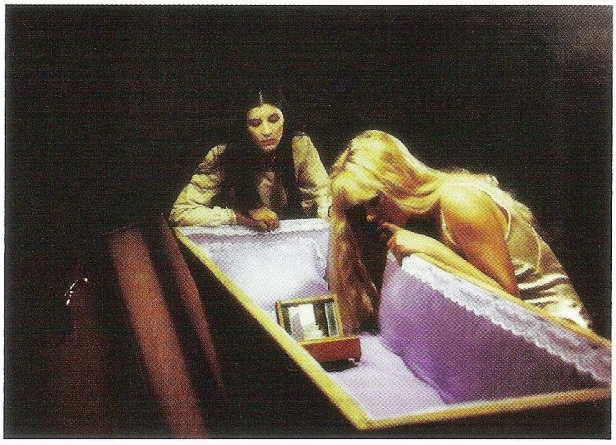
Françoise Blanchard and the music box, the girl's link between the world of the living and the dead.

Patricia Besuard as one of the living dead's victim.



Patricia Besuard, make-up artist Benoit Lestang & Rollin's assistant Dominique Treillou.

Jean Rollin on the set.



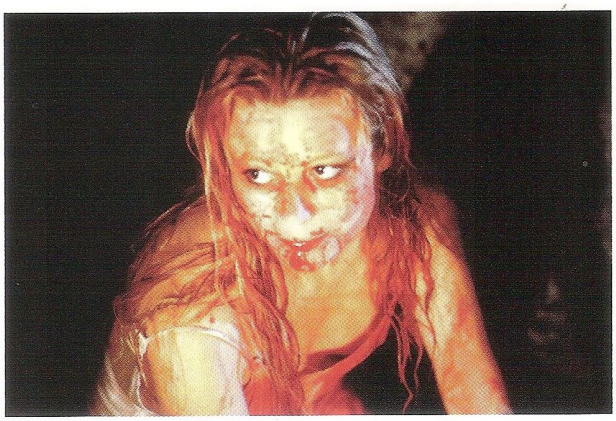
Marina Pierro & Françoise Blanchard.

Marina Pierro

Françoise Blanchard in a dream like set up by director of photography Max Monteillet.

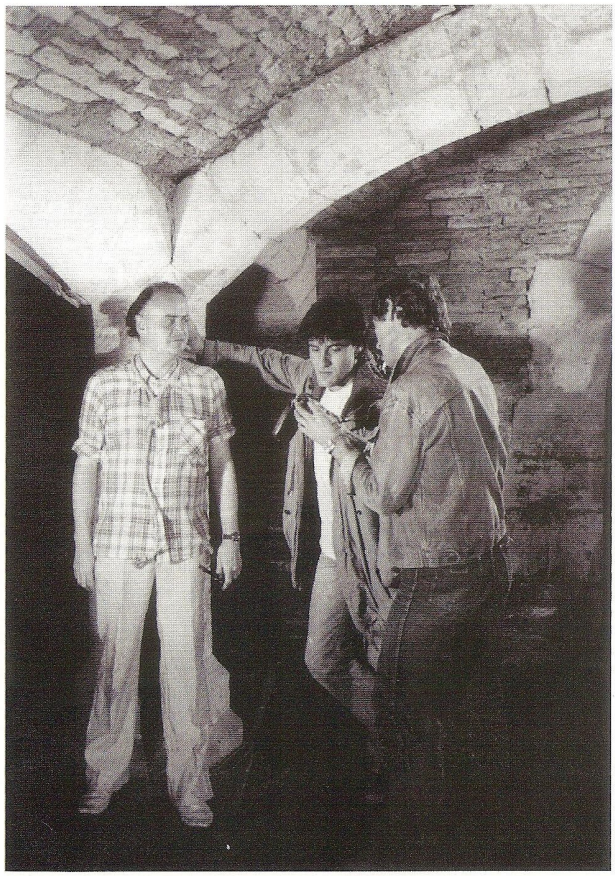
The two little girls (Sandrine Morel right) in the living dead girl's remembrances.

Françoise Blanchard, tearing her friend apart, in the film's blood drenched climax.

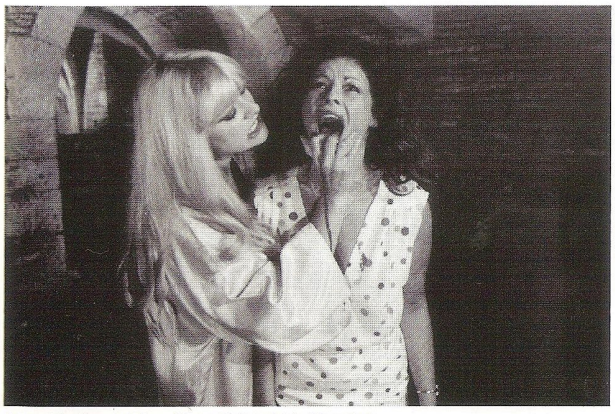


Make-up man Benoit Lestang and Marina Pierro.

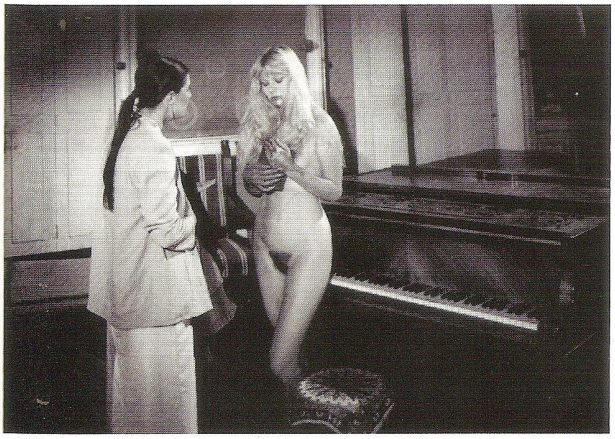
An exhausted Françoise Blanchard recovering from the shoot.



Rollin (left), make-up man Eric Pierre (right) and assistant preparing the sacrifice scene for the living dead girl.



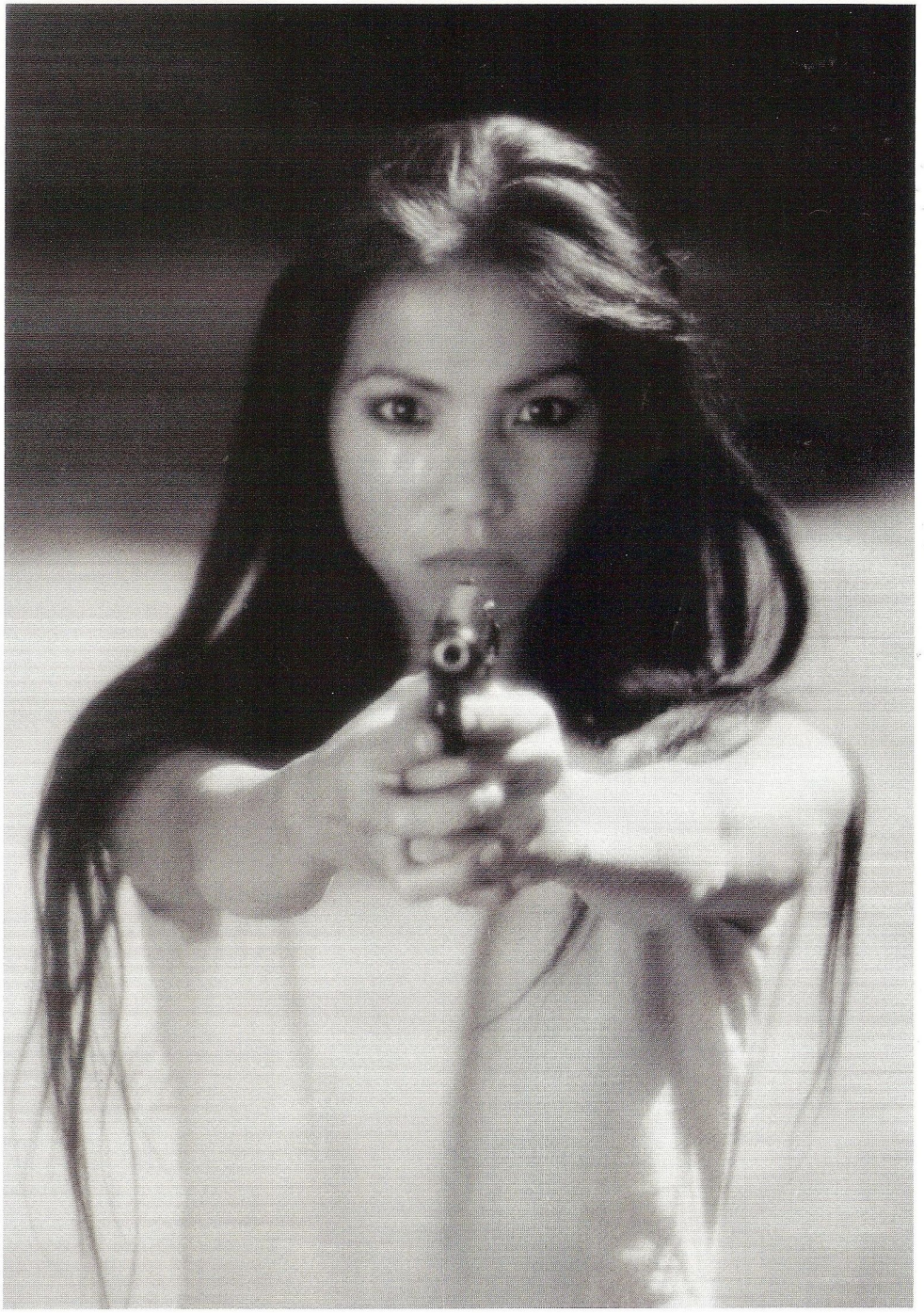
Fanny Magier, a victim of the girl's insatiable bloodlust.



1984

Les Trottoirs de Bangkok

Sidewalks of Bangkok



We had to use some shots that my producer André Samarcq had taken while on vacation. From the mass of unusable footage I managed to extract a few seconds. The entire shoot was great fun, made with some friends and with my old partner in crime Claude Bécognée behind the camera. We filmed in secret in the Chinese quarter around the Porte d'Italie, and on the docks where goods from Asia are unloaded. We also set up a ring for mud wrestling on one of these docks. We recreated an opium den in a seedy nightclub near the Champs-Elysées. And on Bastille Day we filmed in the switchyards of the French Railroad without being discovered by the security guards.

We felt like we were 20 years old again while making this slightly crazy cartoon filled with all the clichés of the genre. The young lead Yoko stopped at nothing, she played her part instinctively, like a small hounded animal. She climbed down the side of a huge freighter hanging perilously over the water where hundreds of stinging jellyfish awaited her. She ducked into a hold and barely escaped being sucked up and crushed while it was being emptied. For a continuity shot she even went for a swim in the Seine. She was fantastic, always in a good mood, ready to do anything. Her scenes are the nicest thing in the film. I have never worked with an actor who was so open-minded and easy to direct. I wrote a story for her and Brigitte Lahaie which became the book "Enfer privée." But where is Yoko today? That is a mystery.

It has been said that BANKOK picked up where VIOL DU VAMPIRE left off. A film that was as crazy as it was incoherent, images bouncing all over the place; part parody and part adventure movie, a sort of serial. I agree. The only difference being that for VIOL we were not aware of the chaos we were creating, and the humor was mostly unintended. We were dead serious. With BANKOK on the other hand we knew exactly what we were doing. We had great fun during the shoot. And I took enormous pleasure in filming in all these preposterous locations: the port of Le Havre, the night club, the Chinese quarter, the switchyards, the scrap yard.

This was truly a B-movie, and if I still had my strength today I would make more films in this way. We felt like pioneers inventing the cinema, playing hide-and-seek with the various guards and policemen.

If there is any film that served as the model for VIOL and for BANKOK, then it's certainly THE MASK OF FU MANCHU. Before I had a chance to see this mythical film I knew the enthusiastic articles by Adou Kyrou and Jean Boullet by heart.

VIOL and BANKOK fed off of the legend of THE MASK OF FU MANCHU. There lies the true popular cinema. The MASK OF FU MANCHU is a much better model than STAR WARS. And movies like FU MANCHU can be made here in France. The proof is in LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE and LES TROTTOIRS DE BANKOK. They are in the same genre and were my most commercially successful films.

All one needs is a Yoko, just like others had their Pearl White.

There were the naive popular films like LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE, REQUIEM POUR UN VAMPIRE, and LES TROTTOIRS DE BANKOK, the fantastic black humor films like LE FRISSON DES VAMPIRES and LES DEUX ORPHELINES VAMPIRES, and the auteur films, which are a little more literary, such as PERDUES DANS NEW YORK and LA ROSE DE FER. These three styles are not incompatible. They are pieces of the same vision.

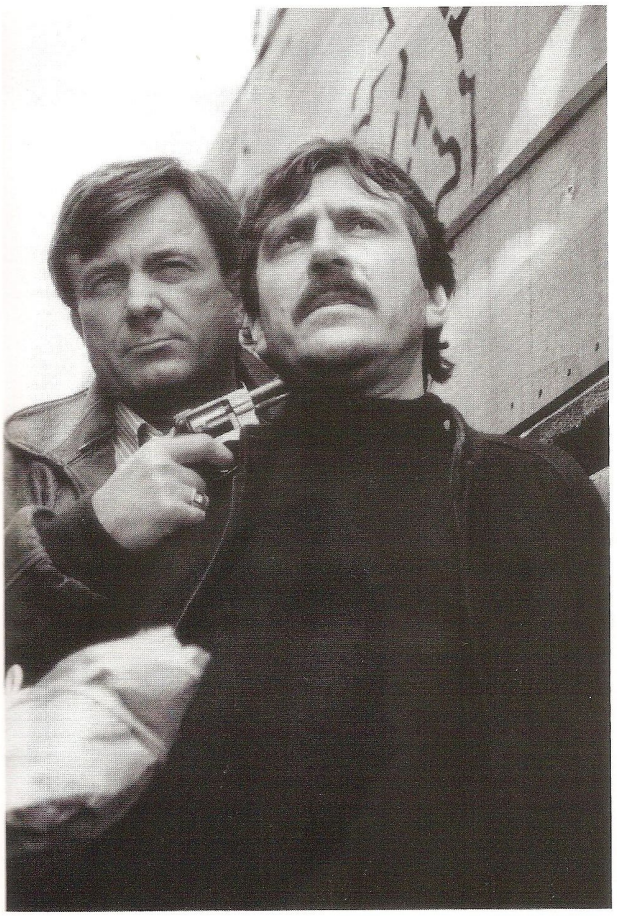
Jean Rollin

Jean Paul Bride & Françoise Blanchard, from living dead girl to heroine in Rollin's charming tribute to American serials of the 20s, LES TROTTOIRS DE BANGKOK.

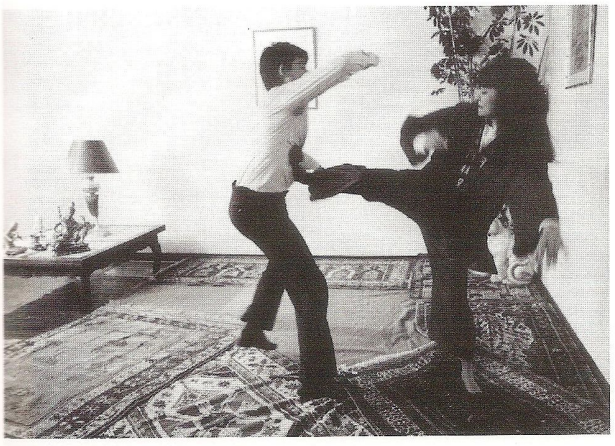
Yoko, another former adult film actress turned Rollin heroine.

Françoise Blanchard and Yoko.

Antonina Laurent & Yoko

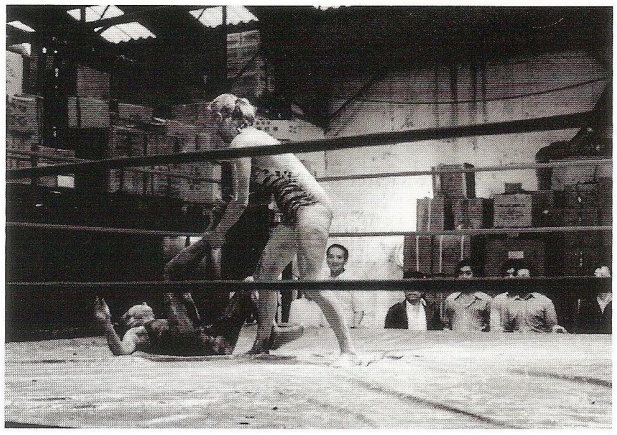


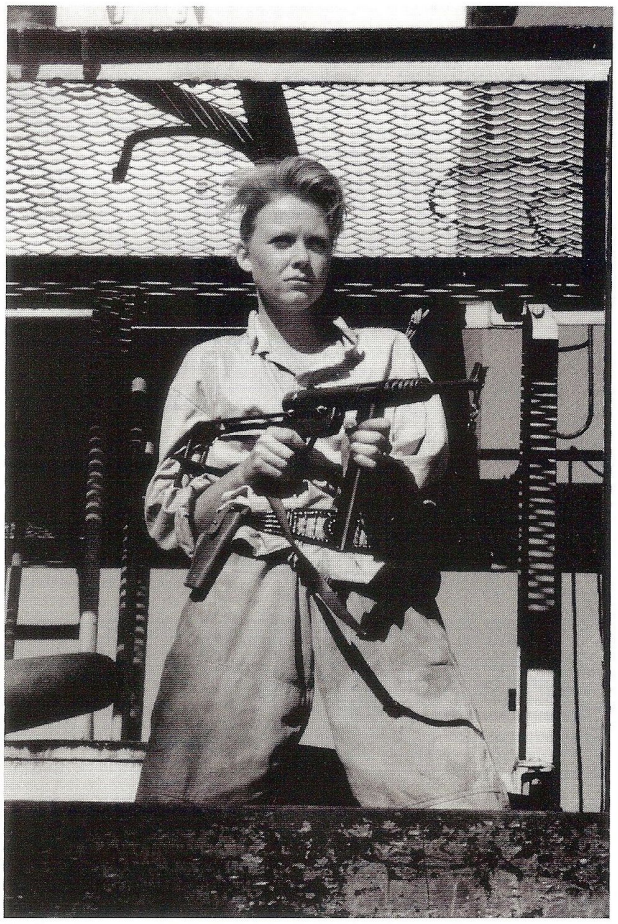
Andrè-Richard Volniévy & Jean-Pierre Bouyxou.



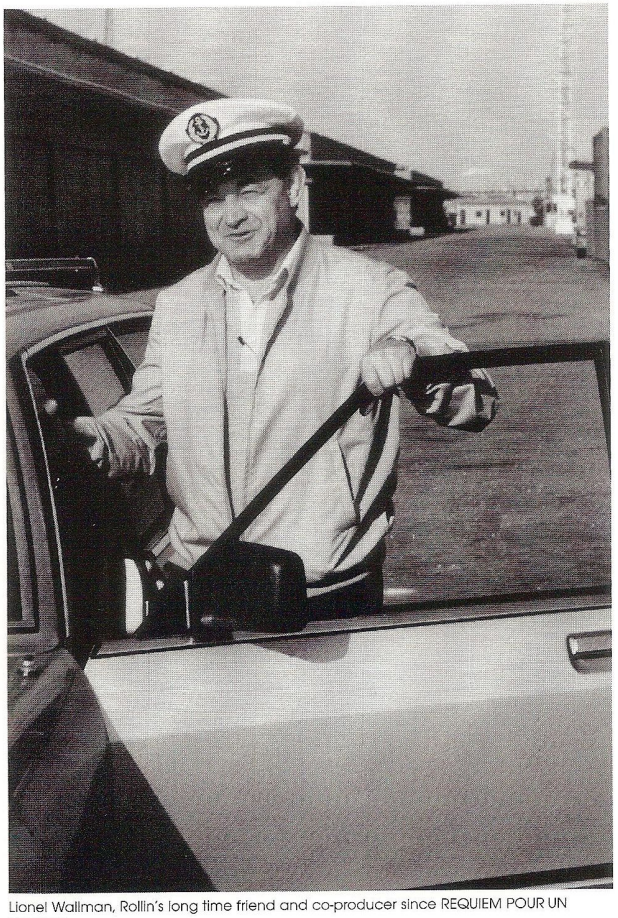
Brigitte Borghese and partner.

Yoko as the little runaway, sensual, brave and innocent, a typical motif in Rollin's œuvre.

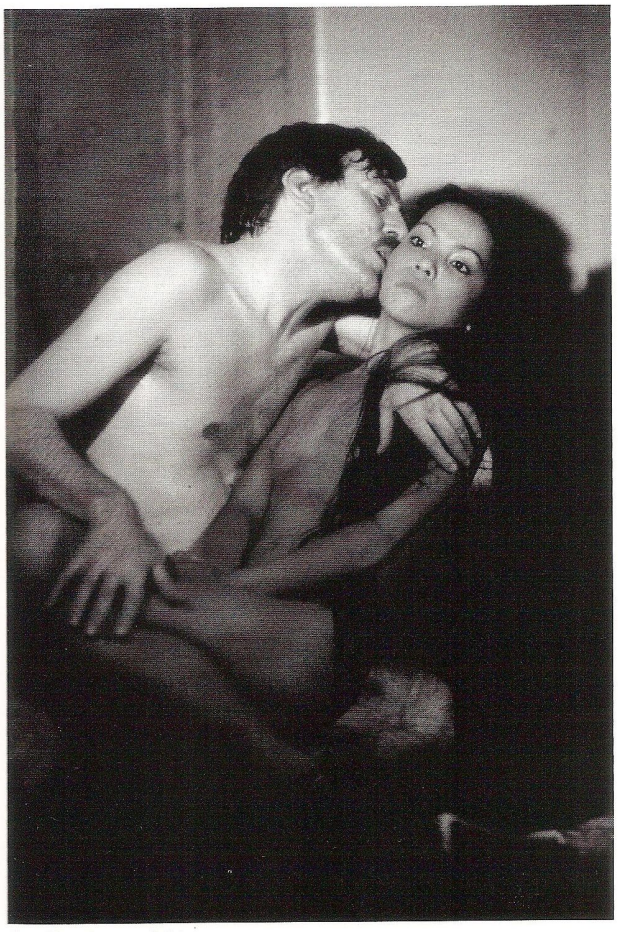




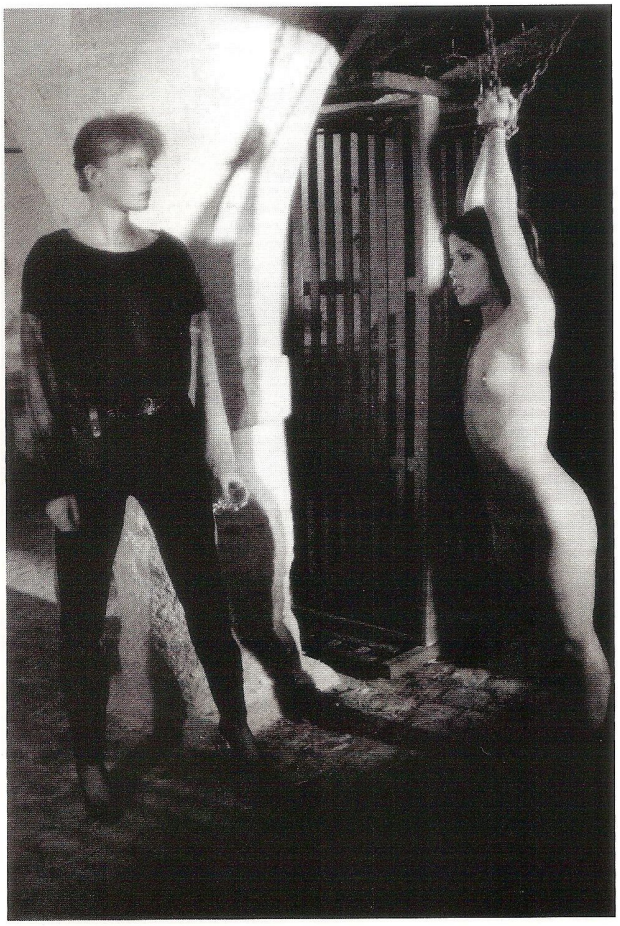
Chokie



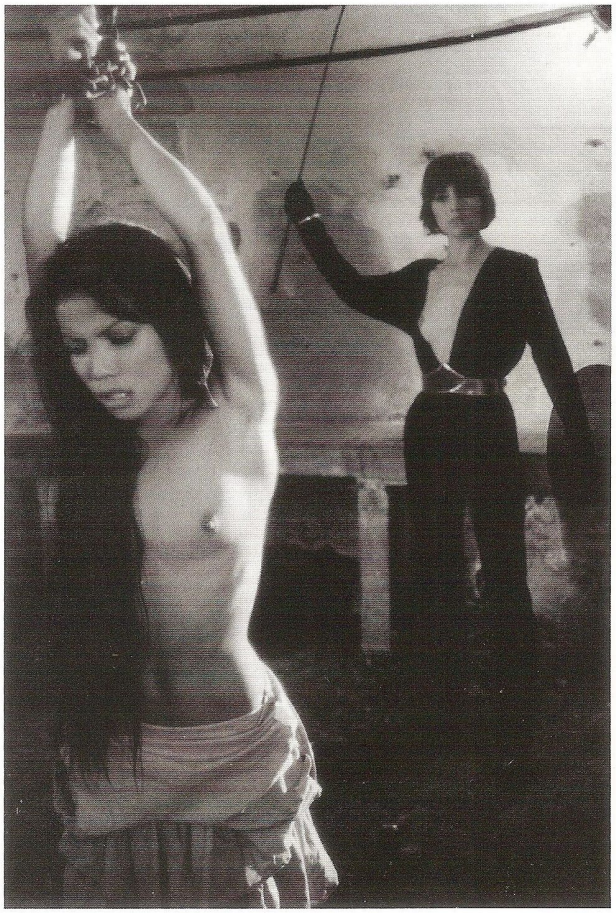
Lionel Wallman, Rollin's long time friend and co-producer since REQUIEM POUR UN VAMPIRE.

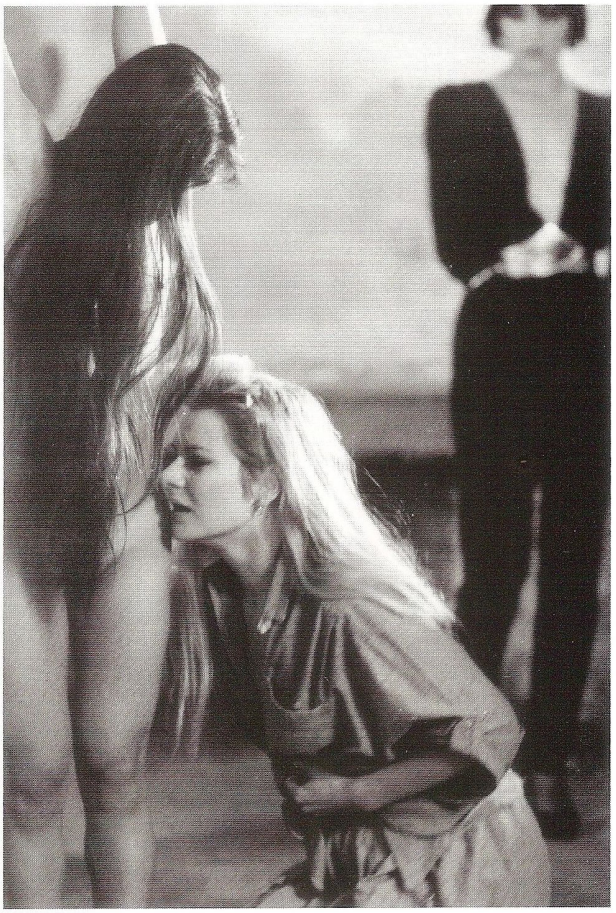


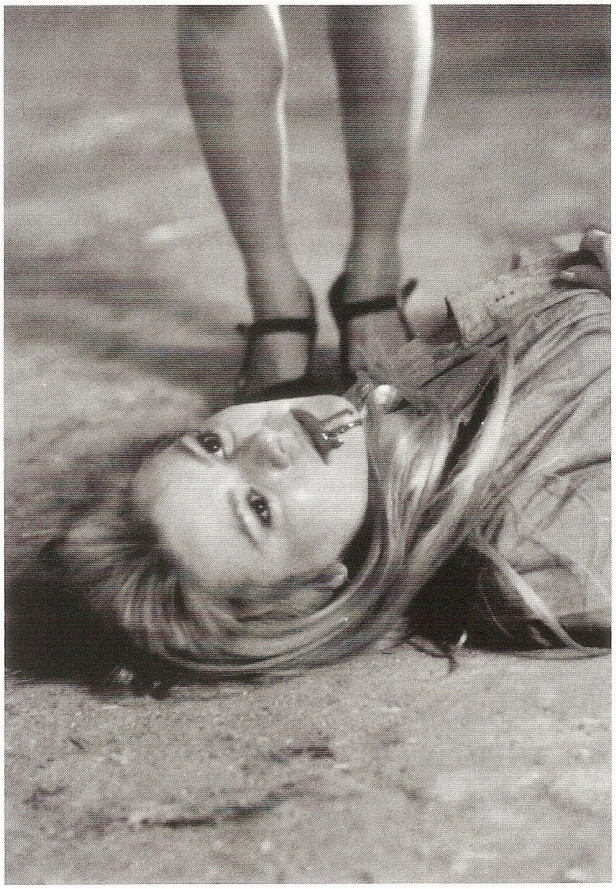
Jean-Pierre Bouyxou & Yoko.



Chokie & Yoko







Gérard Landry & Yoko

Smile for the camera: Choke, Gérard Landry, François Blanchard, Jean Rollin, Yoko & Antonina Laurent.

1991

Perdues dans New York

Lost in New York

A producer friend of mine needed some scenes of New York for a TV-series he was working on. He suggested that I go over there with a cameraman and an assistant and he gave me quite a lot of 16mm film that he had left over.
My old friend and producer Sam Selsky came along as a guide and interpreter.
My assistant was there and she played one of the two lost girls, the other one was a young actress.
When I was in New York I had the idea to improvise on a theme: two young women are separated and desperately look for each other. They run around New York in search of one another and are reunited on the Brooklyn Bridge.
The resulting images were rather strange. The commentary added a hallucinatory quality.
Upon our return to Paris everyone was happy with the result. The producer gave me the means to transform this work into a film. I chose to make an hour-long feature exploring the themes of memory, time, and reality.
In the beginning one sees my two little girl actors, leafing through the "Journal des Voyages" and dreaming about New York. Then as young women, on my fetish beach they find an African statue that magically transports them to New York. In the end as old ladies they long for the past. An African sorceress casts a spell using the statue, and the two are once again little girls on the beach. They enter a small opening in the cliff and disappear forever. Where does reality lie: with the little girls, the young women or the old ladies?

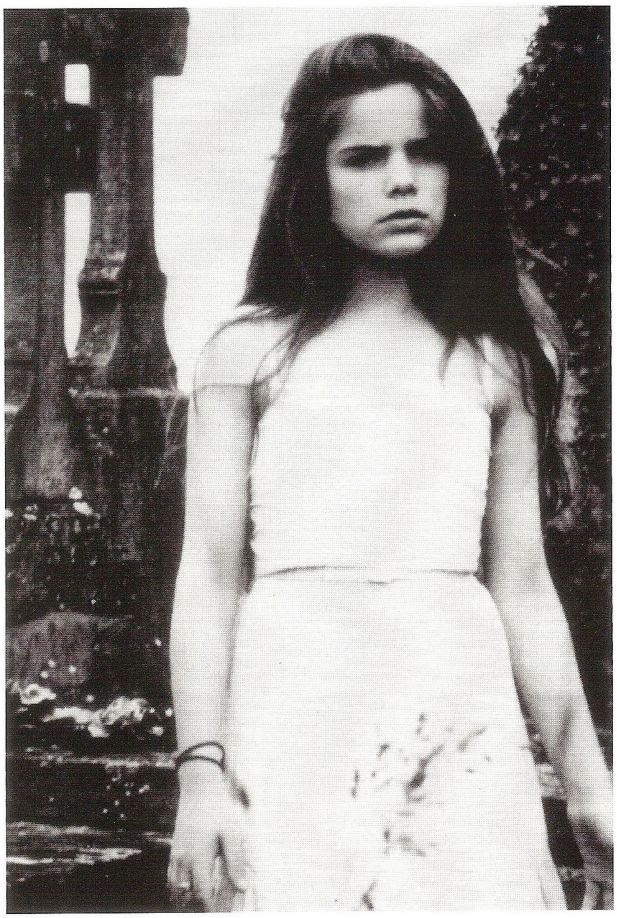
This little film is like an anthology of all the themes and obsessive images I have used in my films. After PERDUES DANS NEW YORK I said that my films would never be the same, that it was back to square one. And it's true. The film brought to an end what had been started within the 13 previous films.
My next two films were from a different mold. PERDUES is the final word, all I had been trying to do and to show is now in the past. A period has come to an end. Therein lies the importance of PERDUES for me: it's the intellectual key to all the others. It contains images that build upon my other films. They evoke FRISSON, REQUIEM, etc. As usual Natalie Perrey plays an old lady full of emotion...

Jean Rollin

Adeline Abitbol, one of the »magic little girls« finding the statue of the African moon godess in Rollin's ultra-lyrical journey through time, space, the world of cinema and literature: PERDUES DANS NEW YORK.

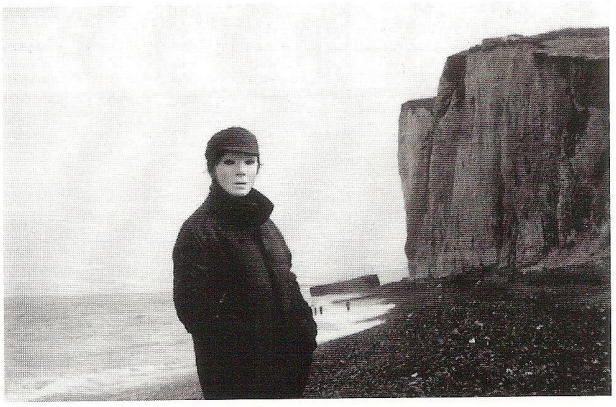
Catherine Herengt & Jean Rollin.

Rollin & director of photography Max Monteillet.



Adeline Abitbol.

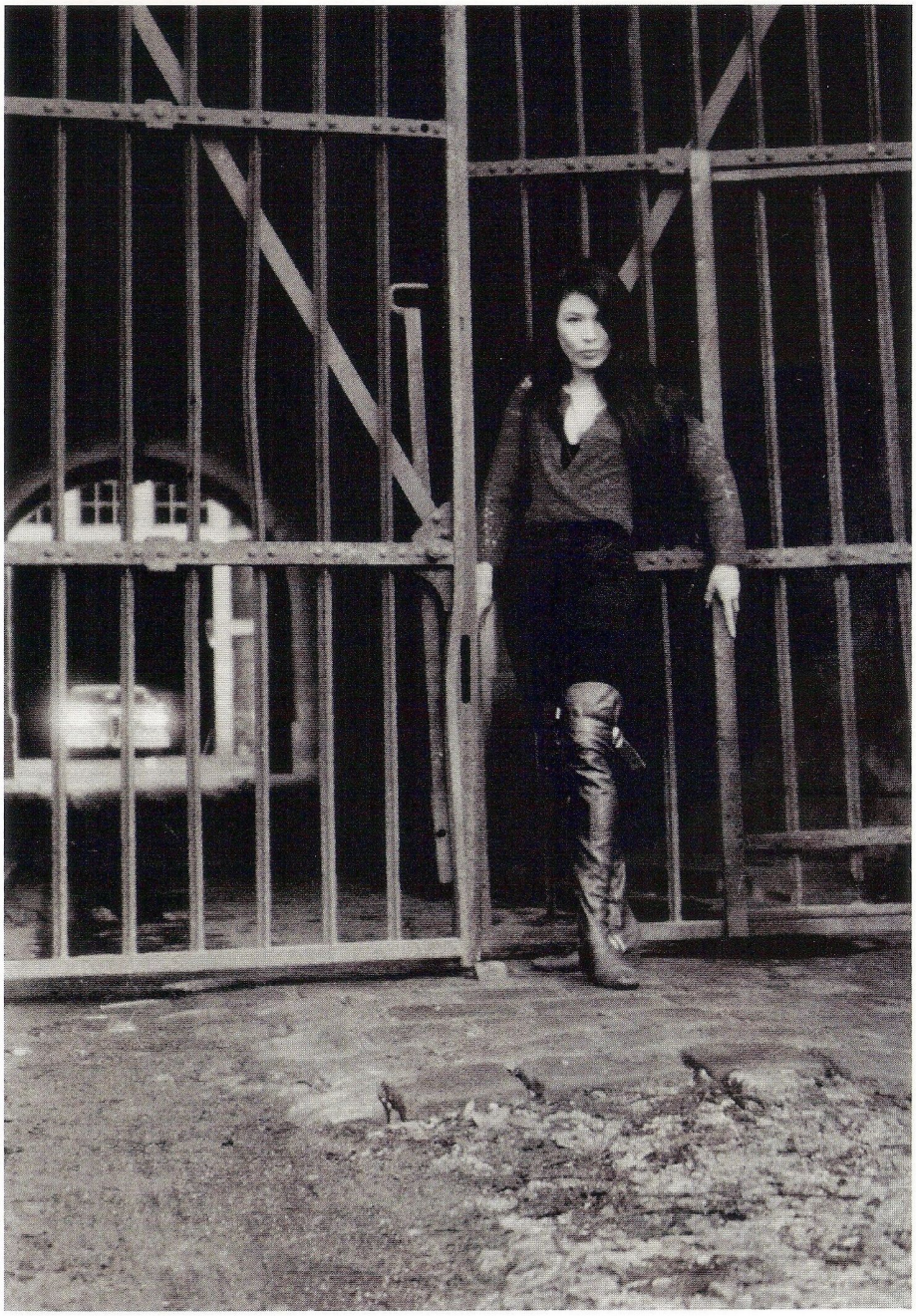
Catherine Lesret.



Catherine Lesret & Catherine Herengt.

1993

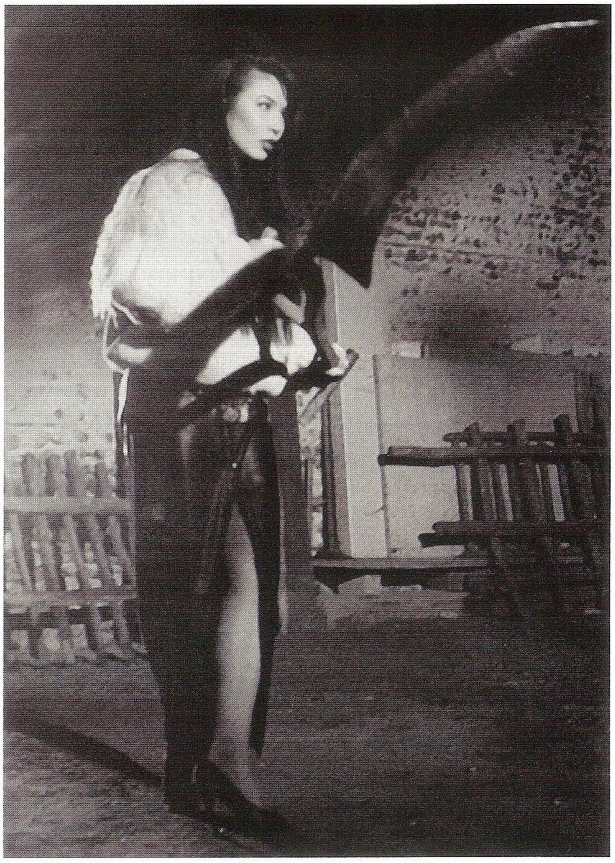
Killing Car



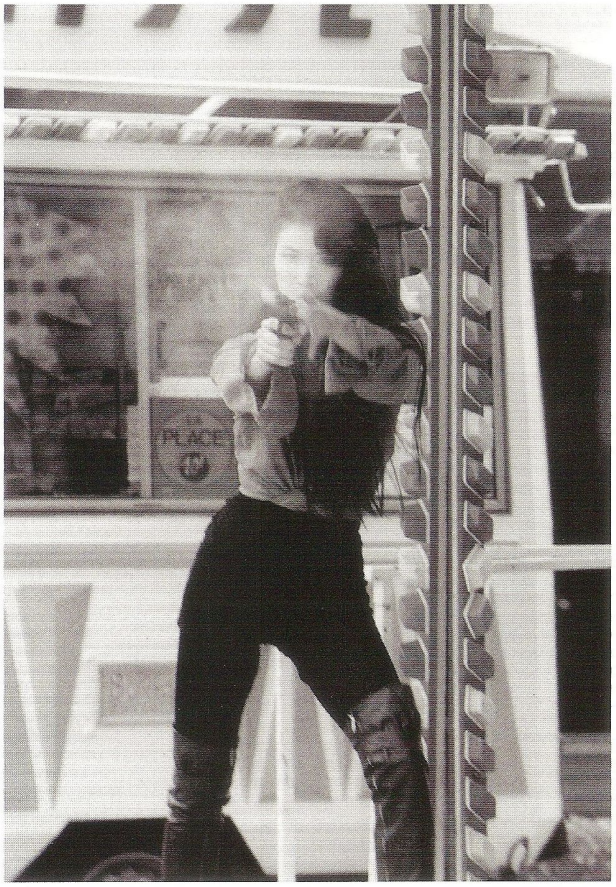
It was an assignment, therefore a challenge. A run-of-the-mill detective flick to be treated like a fantastic film, with inserts, hallucinatory or disconcerting like the ones that I put into my fantastic films.
Things are strange without being irrational. A little like in my book, "Enfer privée," which is by no means fantastic, but where the situations and locations are borne out of the fantastic.
Some of the ideas were intriguing and would have merited more time: the fair; the abandoned concrete bridge; the docks on the Seine; but above all the car junkyard; the ancient fortifications around Paris and the statue vendor along the road.
The wonderful and charming lead Tiki Tsang contributes a lot of mystery to the film. As in LE FRISSON and several of my books she materializes from inside a clock.
It was hard work. It was raining. For the first time in my life I was working with a crew that was in part hostile and ill-humored.
When I finished the film I felt so morally empty that I wound up in the hospital for some time.
One day after a screening of PAUMEES, Serge Moati said to me, "You are filming your dreams." He was undoubtedly right. One night I dreamt of Tiki wearing a long, diaphanous dress, sitting on a plain wicker chair on the roof of her boat floating down the Seine.
KILLING CAR is a bit in the same vein as BANKOK and LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE. The entire production was improvised. Most of the important ideas weren't in the script, they gradually evolved while we were looking for locations and even during the shoot. Like the statue vendor, who was especially interesting at night. And the marble quarry which happened to be in the vicinity of the abandoned bridge, a barbaric structure of concrete and steel.
Jean-Pierre Bouyxou saw in KILLING CAR a magical film filled with bizarre images. And really when one doesn't attempt to follow the story but is happy with taking in the images, like in an unsubtitled film where one doesn't understand the language, the cinematographic surrealism works. Like in LE VIOL, where a kind of dadaist sensibility made up for the incoherent narrative.

Jean Rollin

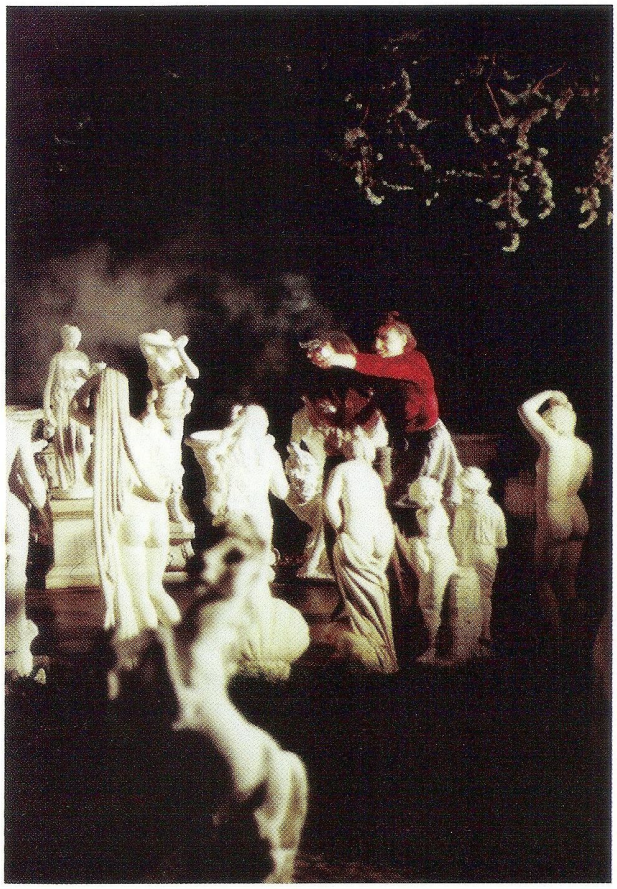
Tiki Tsang, Rollin's mercyless avenger in KILLING CAR.



A tribute to FASCINATION: Tiki Tsang with scythe avenging her lover.

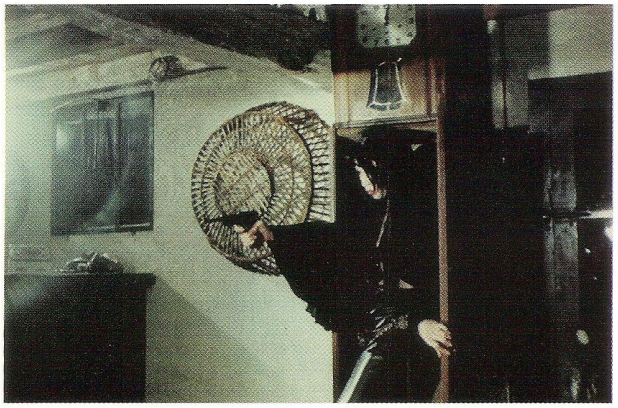


Samuel Tastet & Oum Dierryla.



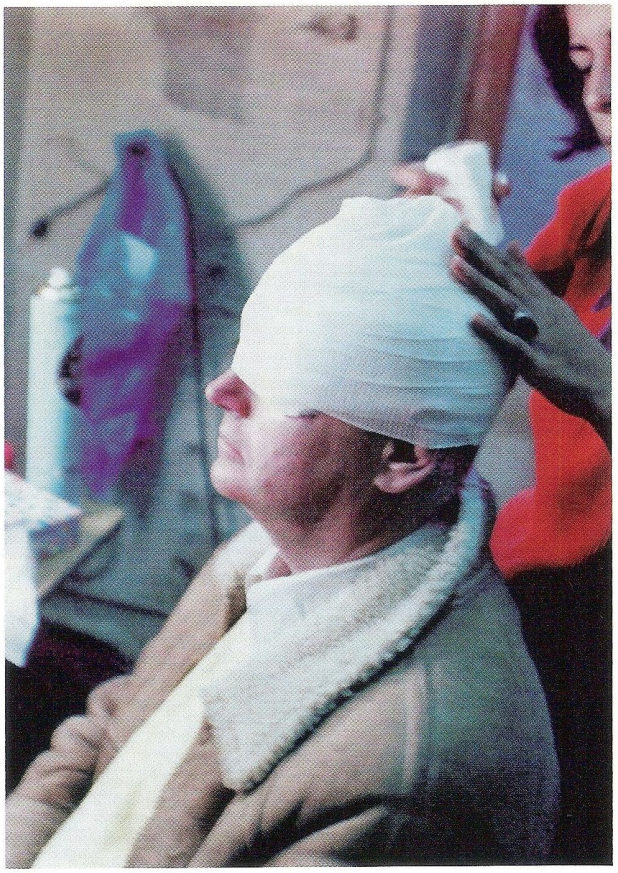
Veronique Djaouti, Rollin's production assistant in a cameo role.

Jacques Michel.



Tiki Tsang & Barbara Annovozi.

Morgan Buquen during a screen test for KILLING CAR.



Jean Rollin is being prepared for his cameo appearance.

Barbara Annovozi, Pascale Lemaire & Tiki Tsang.

1995

Les Deux Orphelines Vampires

The Two Vampire Orphans

Certainly my most accomplished and professional film. The script and dialogues were very polished, and I got to rehearse with the two lead actors long before the filming took place, something I had never been able to do before. There was a suitable budget and a reassuring crew. Jean-Noël Delamarre, a steady companion in my career, was a tremendous support. He was able to take my place when I was forced to leave the set for health reasons before the last scenes were finished. He realized them in my spirit, exactly as I would have filmed them. During moments of great fatigue and exhaustion my collaborator Véronique Djaouti was a great help watching over me like a wolf does over her little ones. Everywhere I went Natalie Perrey was there for me with a chair to sit on. And finally, Norbert Marfaing-Sintès did the lights as planned, without any intervention. The entire crew was perfect. Without them I would have never made it. I would have stopped the film.

My poor health aside it was a pleasure. The two leads were just right, full of invention, and ready to do anything. I felt at ease on the sets, especially in the small cemetery (shot during the night) at Epinay Champlatreux. The château was close by. I finally had an official permit to film at Père-Lachaise cemetery, and it was thrilling to see my two blind girls wandering through this city of stone. That's an image I had dreamt of for a long time: two blind girls roaming about this huge, deserted place.

I went back to the train yards used in BANKOK for the scene with the she-wolf.

That scene was added later as was the one of Tina Aumont as the ghoul. The young actor Nathalie Karsenti had come to see me about making a fantastic film. There was no suitable part for her, but she had such an engaging personality that I invented the she-wolf: real or fake, beast or mentally disturbed person. I have developed this character further for Nathalie in a script entitled "La louve," which at the moment is making the rounds in search of a producer.

There isn't a false note in the whole film. Little Nada, making her film debut as the naive sick girl in the infirmary of the orphanage played the role without any additional instruction.

Anissa Rohmer played a very naive and touching young farm girl.

I was looking for my Doctor Dennery for a long time. Bernard Charnacé wrote to me and I hired him immediately. And finally I got several old friends to appear in the film: the fabulous Marie-Laurence who played one of the old ladies in PERDUES DANS NEW YORK; Natalie Perrey in the role of Sister Marthe. (Natalie is a very good actor, she is able to give any character a sense of depth and reality.) And then Anne Duguel, the novelist, who worked on some of my book collections, "Frayeur" and "Poche revolver fantastique", in the role of Mother Superior. Her daughter Mélanie portrayed one of the orphans' last two victims, my niece Sandrine played the other.

With regard to the atmosphere on the set, there was a certain homogeneity, a rare and precious form of unity. I put certain images in the film that had been lodged in my had for a long time: the "Passage des eaux," a small pipe-like alleyway; the Père-Lachaise of course; but also the vast doorway leading nowhere, a giant yawn of emptiness, which I noticed every day on the way to and from the set. I managed to set aside one hour in the work schedule so that we could use the site for the orphans to walk through. Then I had "my" bat woman in a superb set in a chapel and then in the underground passages and cellars of the château.

The film closely follows the book (and a part of the second volume), even down to the dialogues, which gives them a literary feel, a bit out of phase with the film, which I rather like.

Obviously, we were unable to recreate the inauguration of the great sun temple with its thousands of sacrificed victims. But that was an important chapter. So I decided to have the actors simply recite a few pages from the book. That's where the magic of the cinema came into play: without rehearsing a single thing, Isabelle and Alexandra spoke their lines and played the scene flawlessly, with just the right amount of pathos, and devoid of pompousness—all in one take. And Norbert followed them with the camera, improvising along the way, never losing them. The take took four minutes and was used in its entirety.

And I had a production crew that worked without a hitch: my old crony Lionel Wallman, Sam Selsky making his last film and Jacques Michel, who had already worked on KILLING CAR. All this gave me the greatest freedom I ever had on a film. It is tamer, but better constructed and more controlled. One might miss the baroque craziness of VIOL, FRISSON, or REQUIEM, the wild improvisations of BANKOK or KILLING CAR, and the strangeness of DEMONIAQUES or LA ROSE DE FER, but at the same time I believe that ORPHELINES renders a very accurate picture of the cinema as I understand it, that's to say having the freedom to film what I feel like.

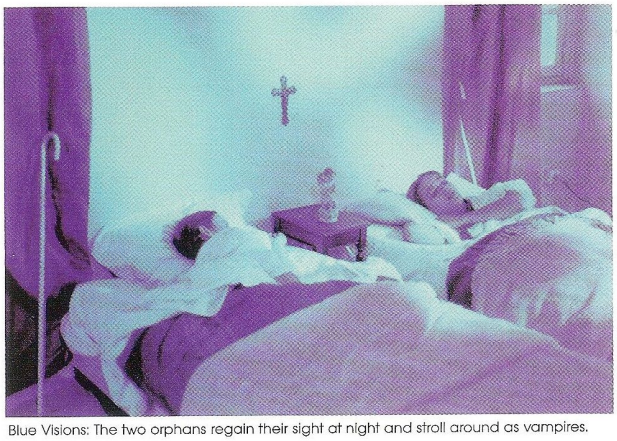
LA MORTE VIVANTE earned me the Special Audience Award at the Mostra, which is now called Fantafestival; when LES DEUX ORPHELINES VAMPIRES was shown at this festival I was awarded the Special Jury Prize for Life-time Achievement.

I don't like the spirit of competition and have never taken part in the voting for the César Awards, but this special prize was given to me in a different spirit. There was no competition, and it was an honor to have it presented to me by one of my dearest friends, Adriano Pintaldi.

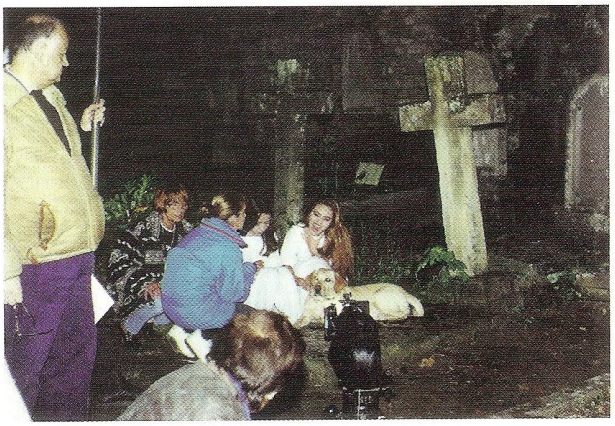
Jean Rollin

Isabelle Teboul, Martin Snaric & Alexandra Pic.

Bernard Charnacé, Alexandra Pic, Isabelle Teboul, Natalie Perrey & Anne Duguëll.



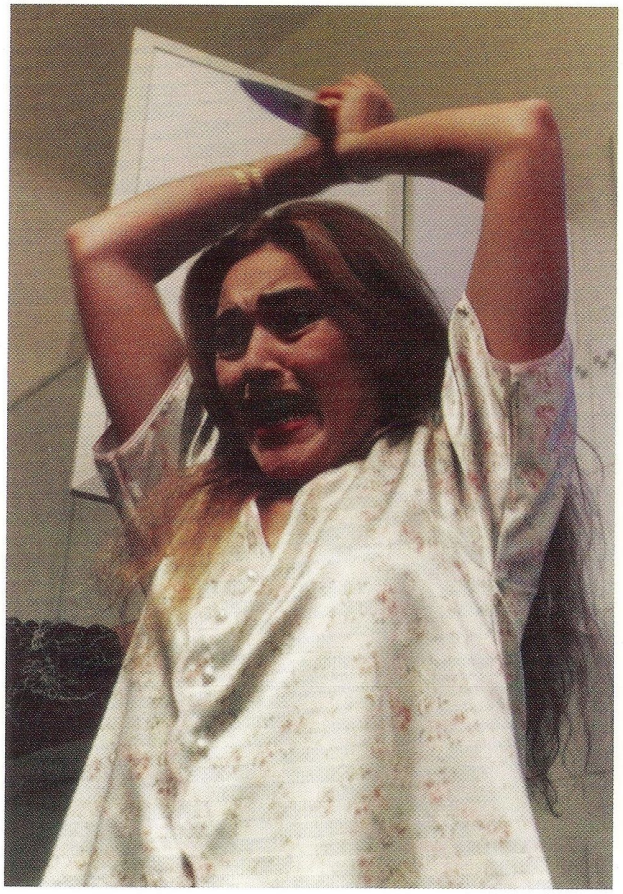
Blue Visions: The two orphans regain their sight at night and stroll around as vampires.

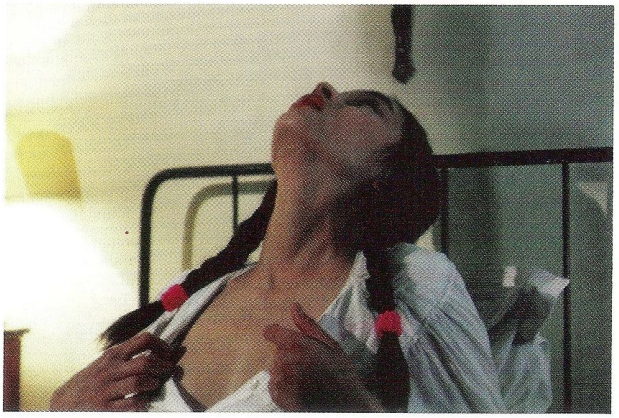


Jean Rollin supervising the atmospheric cemetery scene.

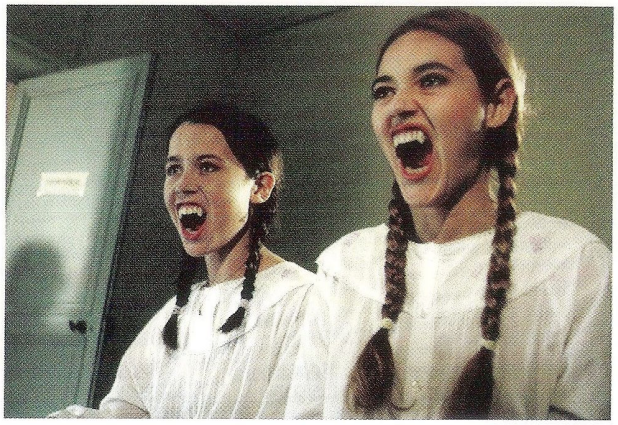
Isabelle Teboul, production director Lionel Wallman & Alexandra Pic.

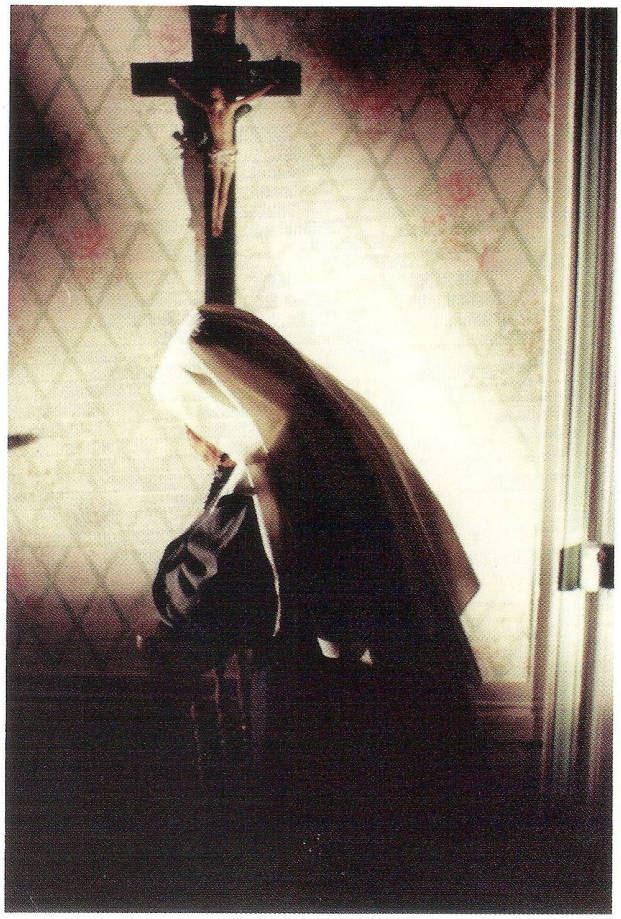
Brigitte Lahaie, returning onto the screen, in a guest role as one of the vampire girls' victims in an old circus.





Mélanie Karalli.





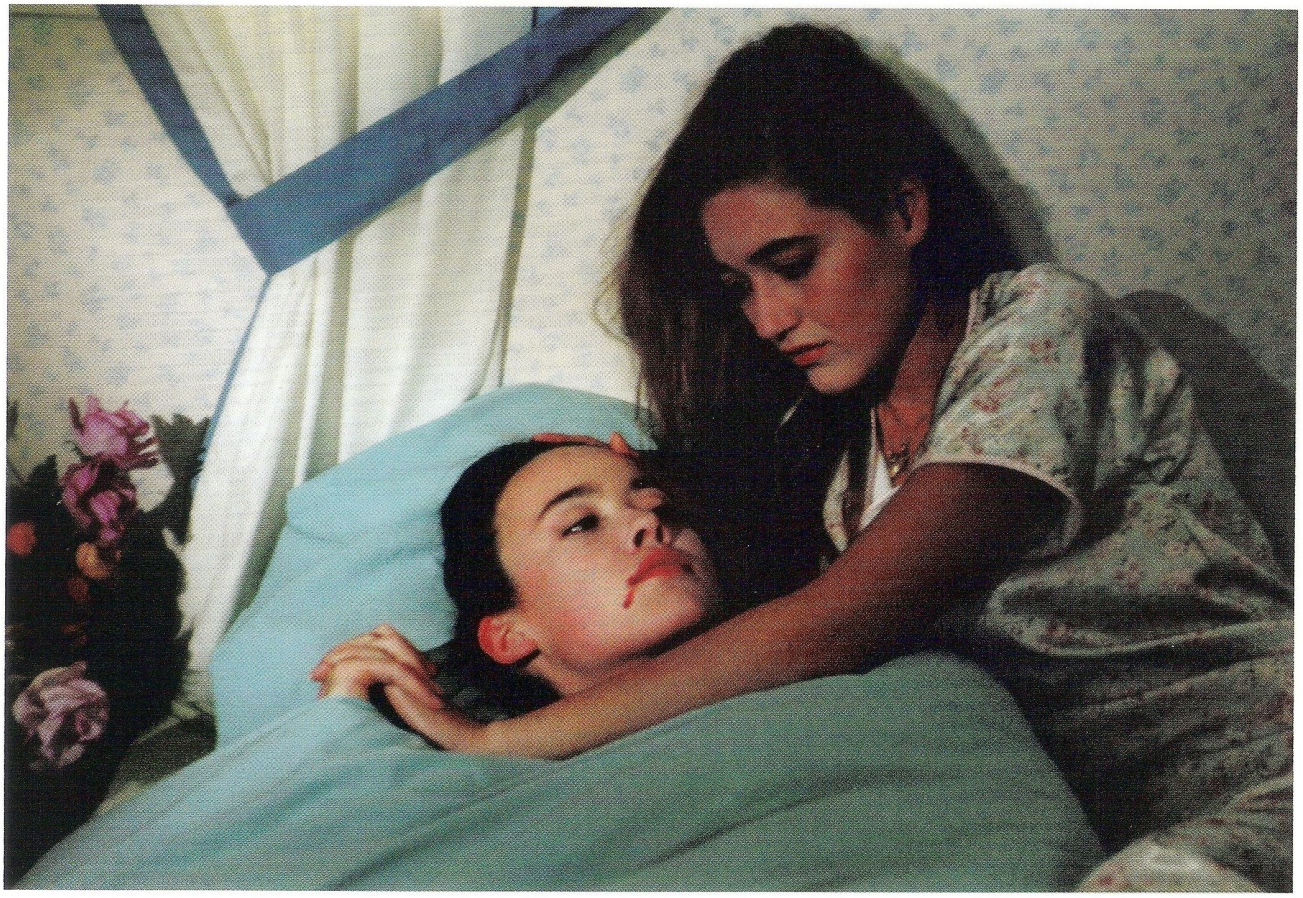
Rollin & Tina Aumont.

Isabelle Teboul & Alexandra Pic in Rollin's adaption of his own series of books cycling around the adventures of the two vampire orphans.

Director of photography Norbert Marfaig-Sintès & Tina Aumont on the set.

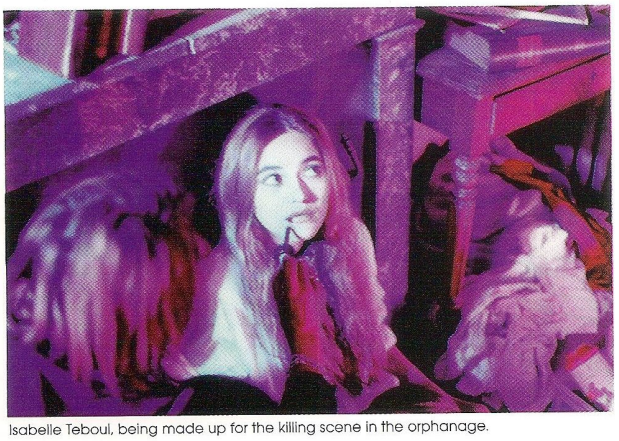
Rollin rehearsing the girl's nightly trip to the abandoned cemetery.

Nathalie Karsenty as the wolf-woman, protagonist in one of Rollin's forthcoming projects.



Behind the scenes: the orphan vampires are waiting for their scene.

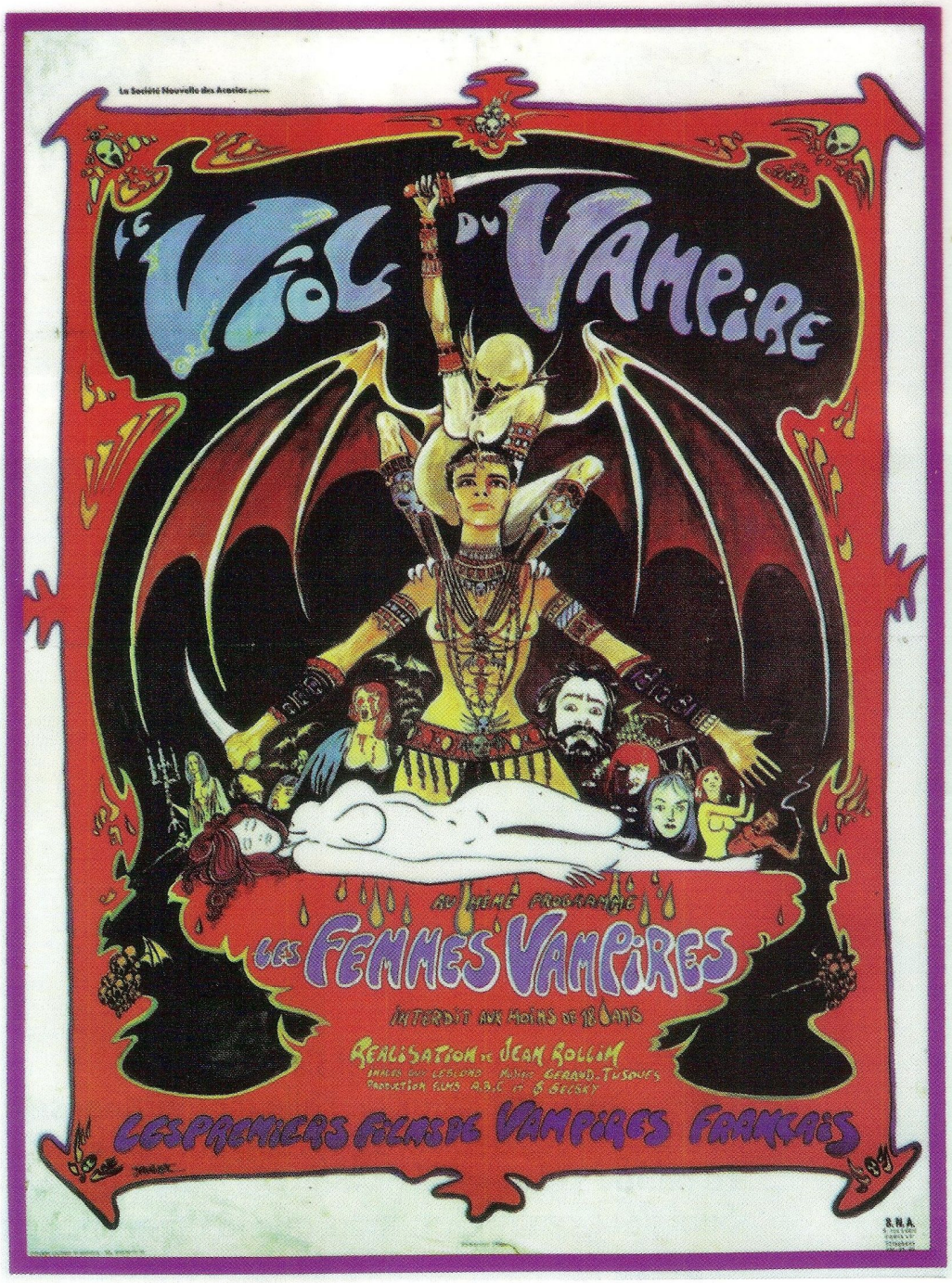
Isabelle Teboul & Alexandra Pic posing for a promo shot.

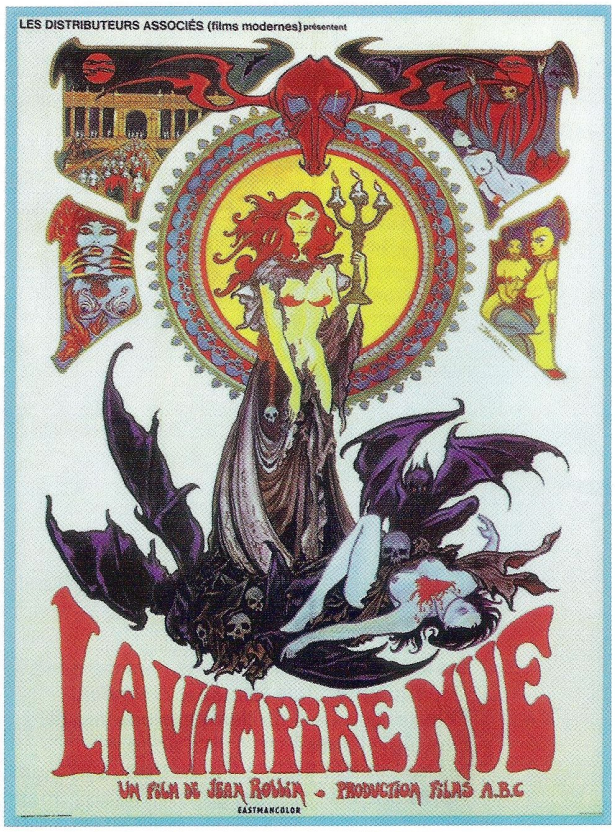


Isabelle Teboul, being made up for the killing scene in the orphanage.

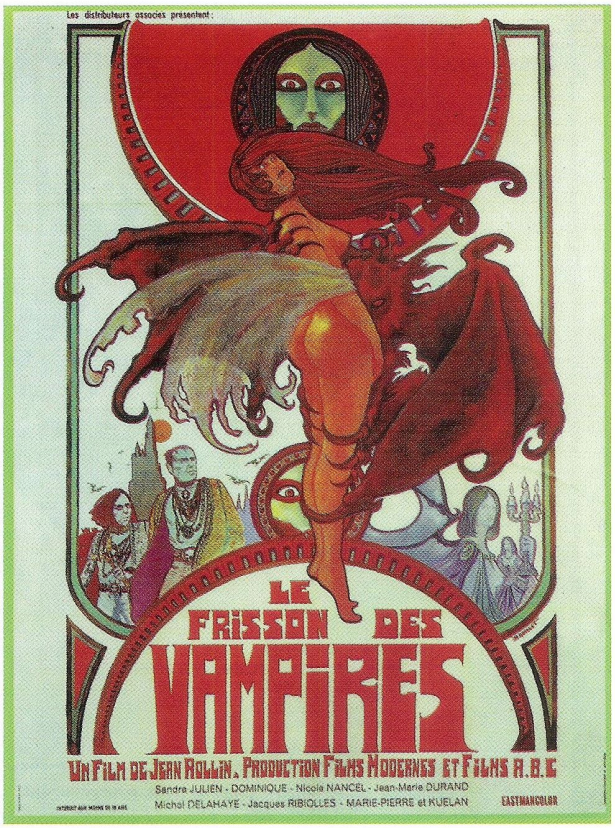
One of the most beautiful cinematogrpahy ever in a Rollin film, thanks to director of photography Norbert Marfaing-Sintès.

Artwork

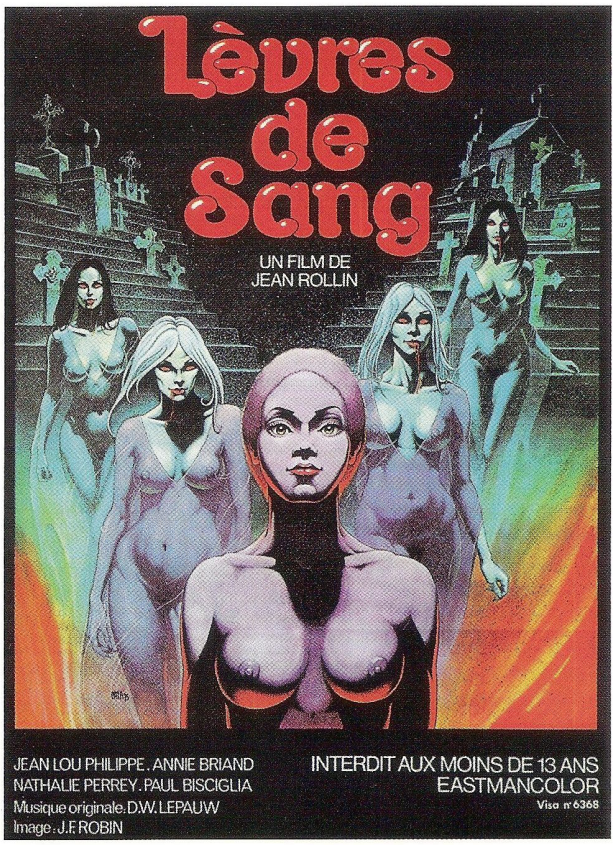

La Société Nouvelle des Acacias présente
LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE
AU 2ème PROGRAMME
LES FEMMES VAMPIRES
INTERDIT AUX MOINS DE 18 ANS
REALISATION DE JEAN ROLLIN
LES PREMIERS FILMS DE VAMPIRES FRANÇAIS

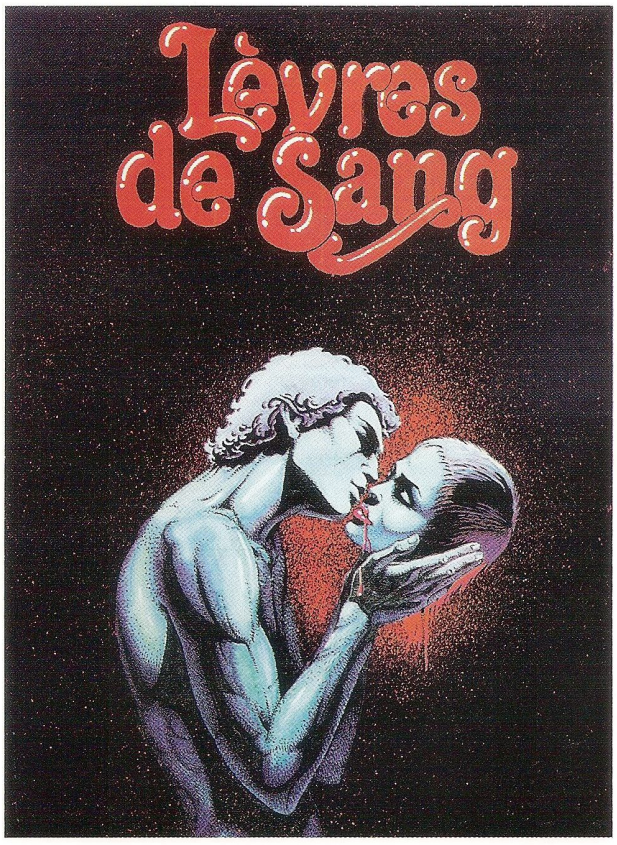


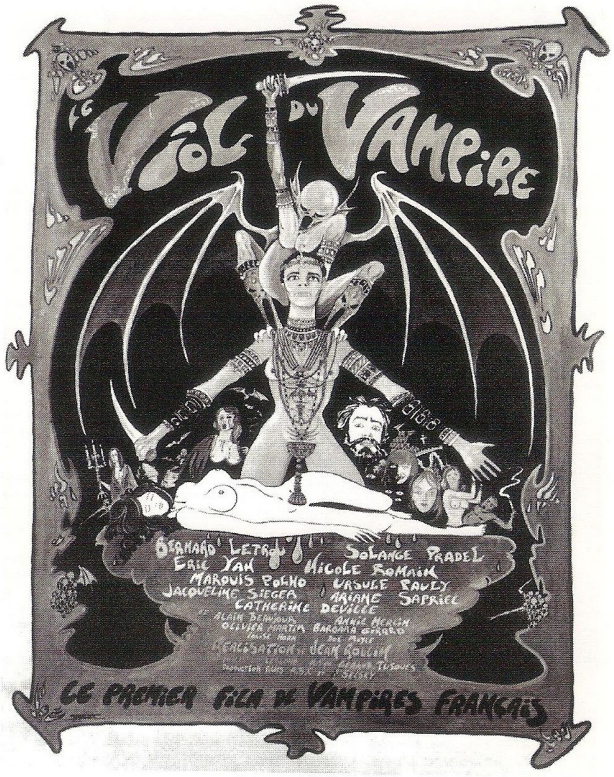
Philippe Druillet's beautiful one-sheet design for LA VAMPIRE NUE.



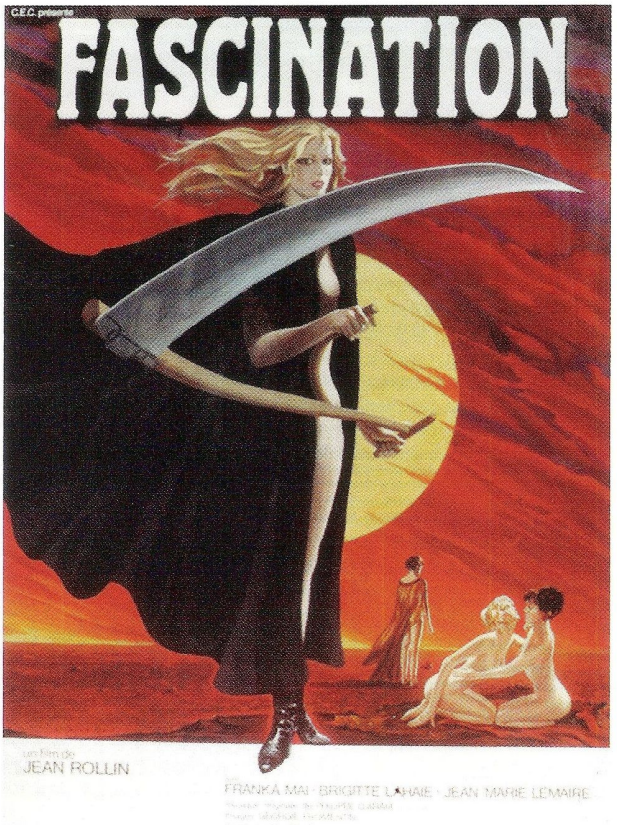
Philippe Druillet's design for LE FRISSON DES VAMPIRES.



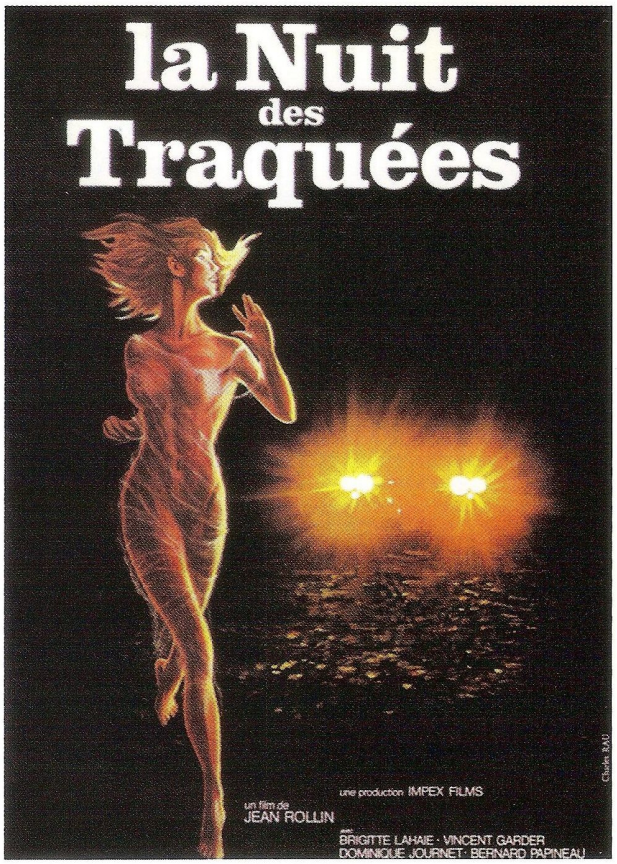




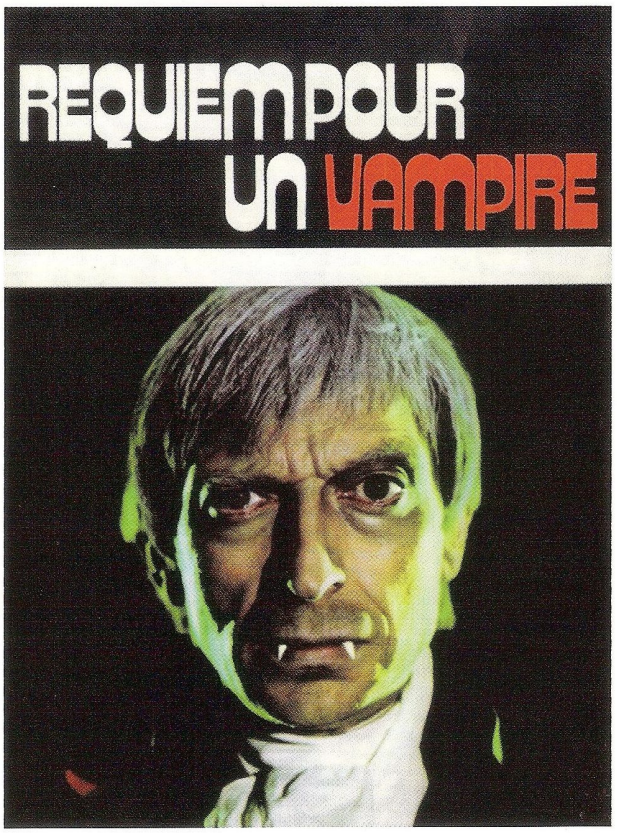
Philippe Druillet's original artwork for LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE, rejected by French authorities.

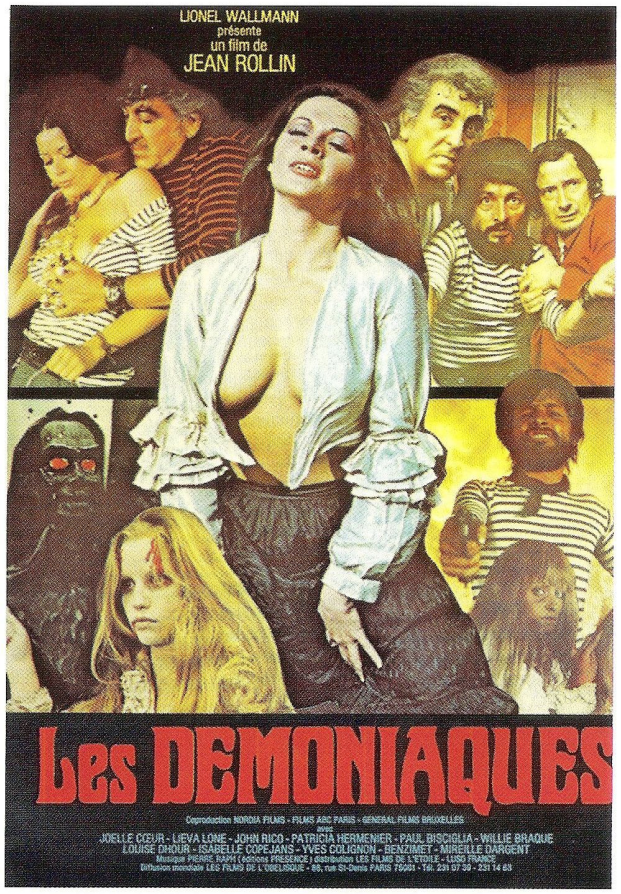


A first draft for the poster of LA MORTE VIVANTE, rejected by French authorities due to its violent images.



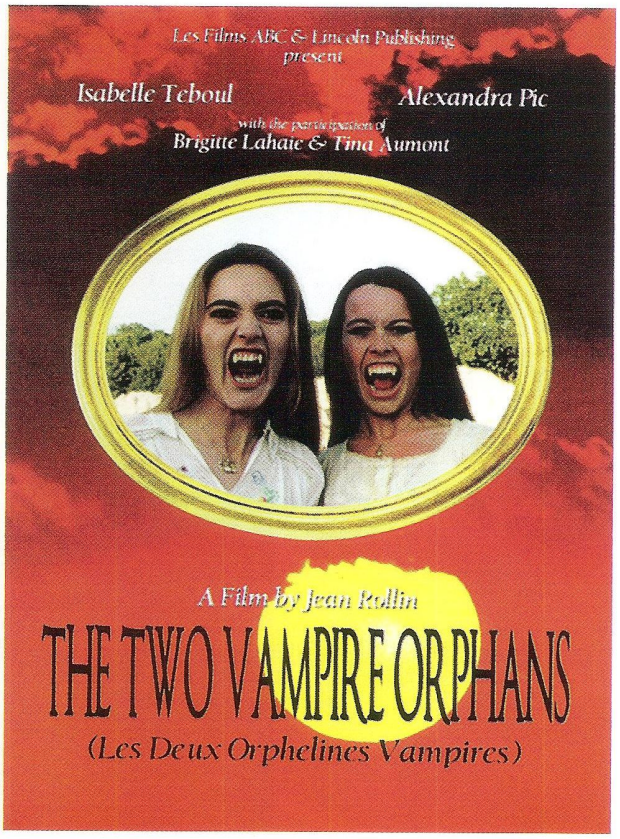
The original French one-sheet for LA NUIT DES TRAQUEES.



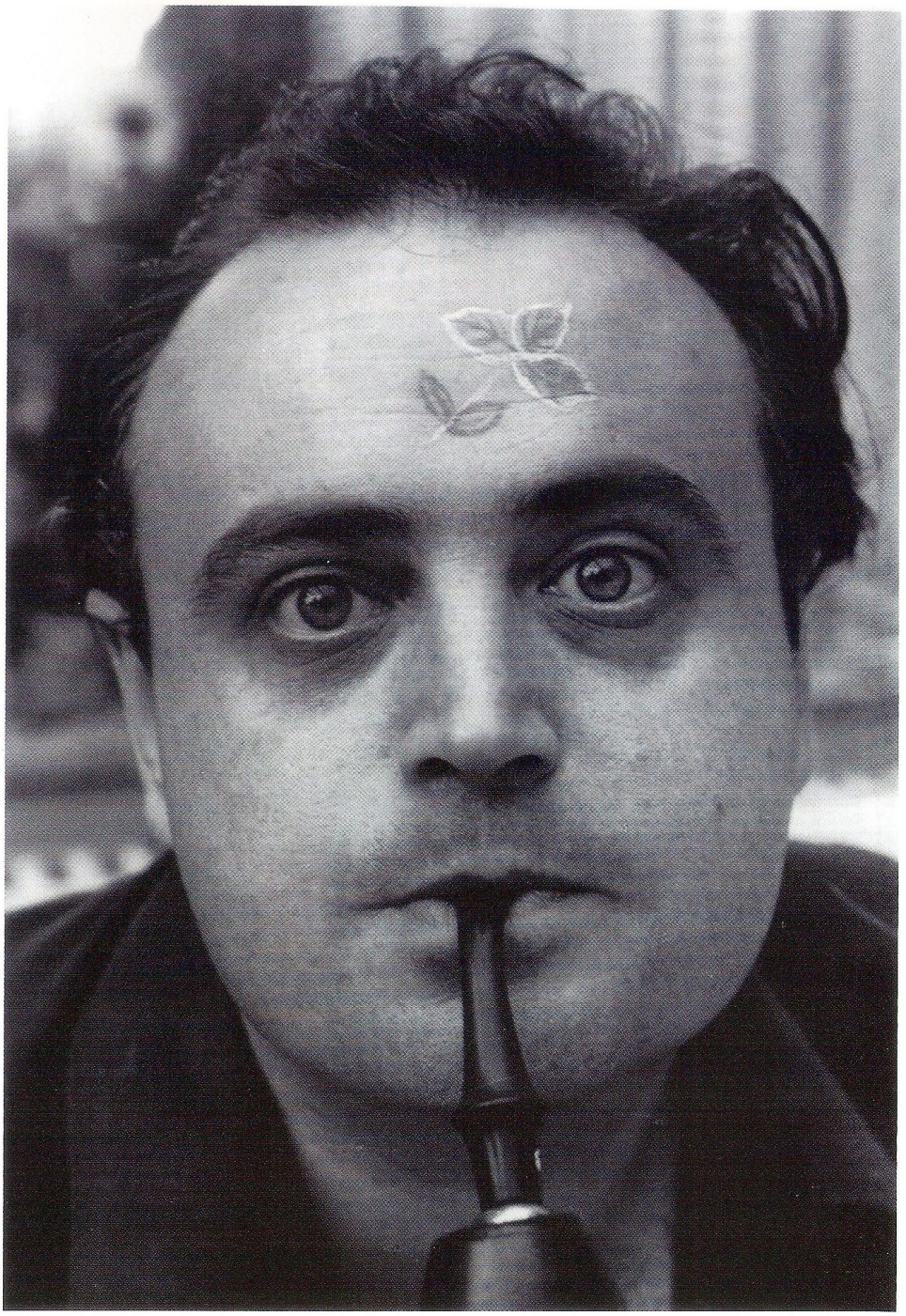

LIONEL WALLMANN
présente
un film de
JEAN ROLLIN
Les DEMONIAQUES

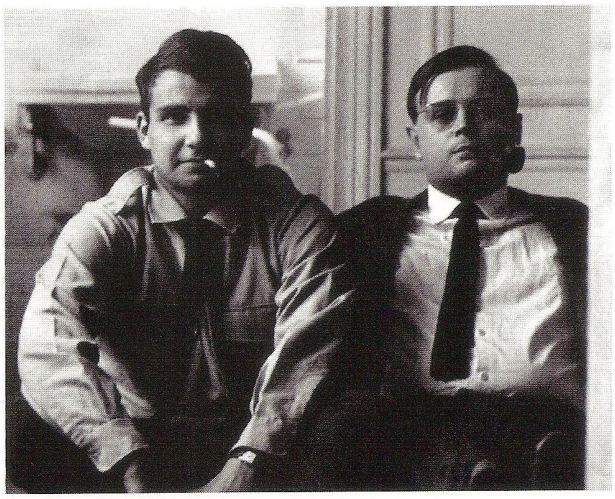
AVIA-FILMS et les FILMS A.B.C.
présentent
un film de MICHEL GENTIL
STRICTEMENT INTERDIT AUX MOINS DE 18 ANS
Jeunes Filles Impudiques

STOP.....HALTE AUX PESTICIDES....STOP.....VILLAGES ET VIGNES CONTAMINES..STOP..URGENT SECOURS
Claude GUEDJ
présente :
LES RAISINS DE LA MORT !
un film de Jean ROLLIN

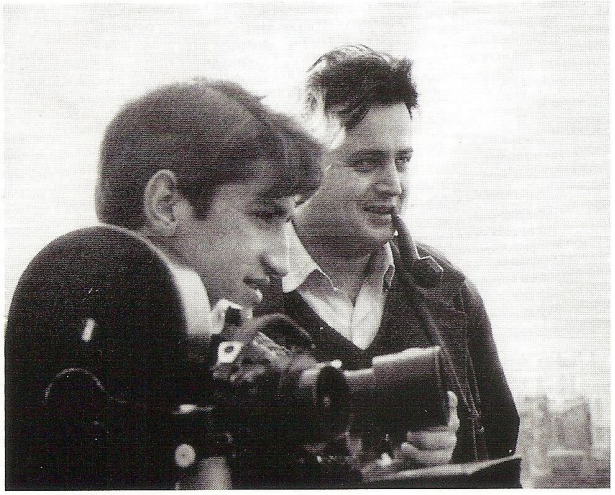

Les Films ABC & Lincoln Publishing
present
Isabelle Teboul
Alexandra Pic
with the participation of
Brigitte Lahaie & Tina Aumont
A Film by Jean Rollin
THE TWO VAMPIRE ORPHANS
(Les Deux Orphelines Vampires)

Behind the Scenes





Director Serge Moati and Jean Rollin in the early days of their career.



Director of photographie Gérard de Battista and Rollin during the shooting of LES PAYS LOINS, an early short of 20 minutes running time.

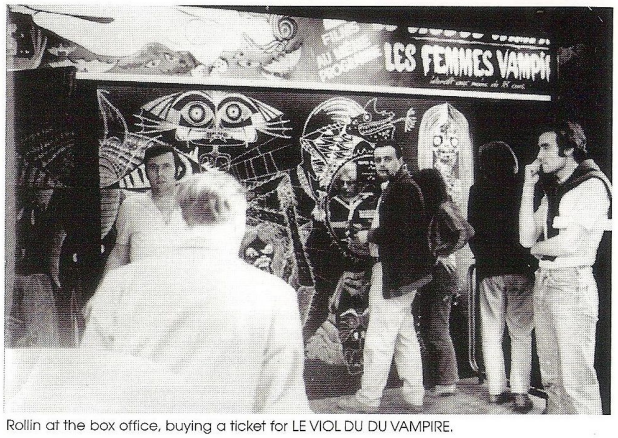
Jean Rollin and his brother Olivier on the set of LA VAMPIRE NUE.

Rollin filming L'ITINÉRAIRE MARIN on his »his« beach at Dieppe.

The crew of CIEL DE CUIVRE, an early short. Rollin is on the right.

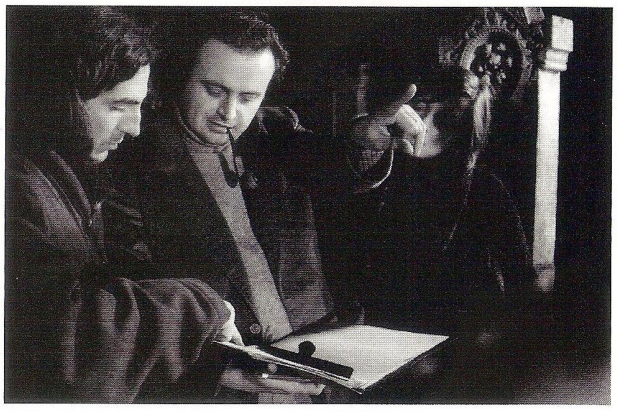
Jean Rollin, preparing for his acting role in Robert Lapoujade's LE SOURIRE VERTICAL.

Jean Rollin and make-up man Eric Pierre on the set of FASCINATION.

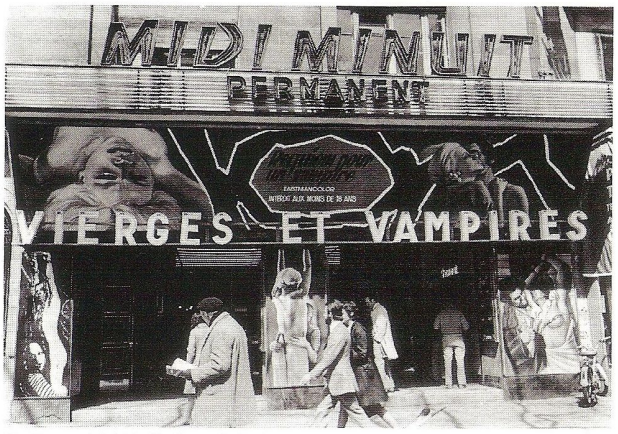


Rollin at the box office, buying a ticket for LE VIOL DU DU VAMPIRE.

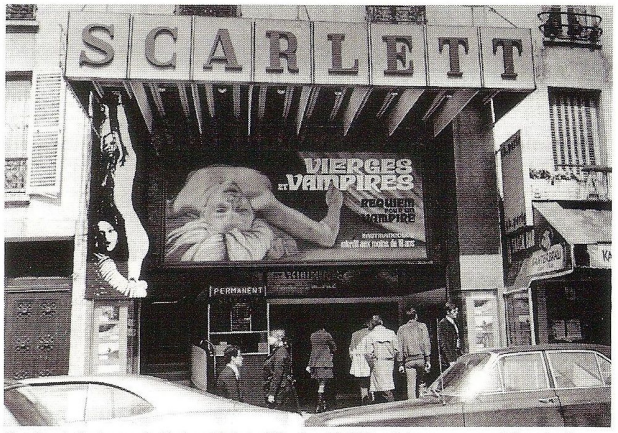
Jean-Jacque Renon, Rollin's long time collaborator and director of photography (behind the camera) & producer Sam Selsky (right).



Jean-Noël Delamarre and Rollin on the set of LA ROSE DE FER.

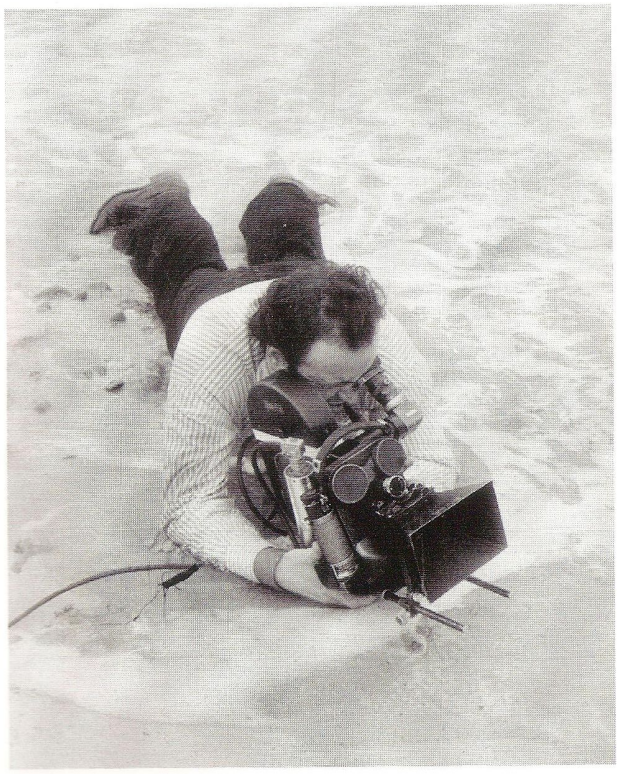


The famous Midi Minuit cinema in Paris, showing Rollin's REQUIEM POUR UN VAMPIRE under its alternative title.



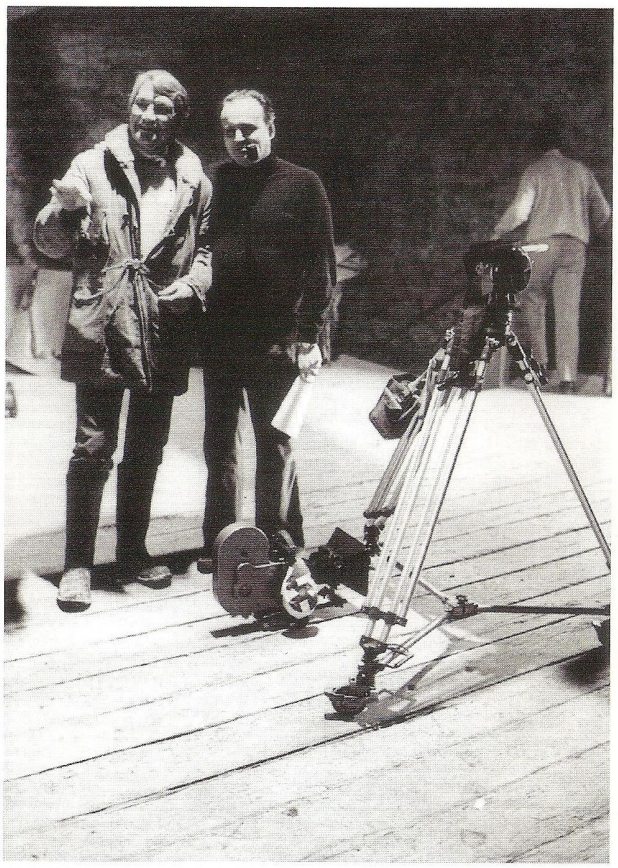
The Scarlett cinema in Paris, which, just like the Midi Minuit, became a cult theater for people interested in obscure cinema.

R.J. Chauffard (of Jean Paul Sartre's HUIS CLOS, Samuel Beckett's LA DERNIÈRE BANDE, Marguerite Duras' LE SQUARE fame), Jean Rollin and director of photography Jean-Jacques Renon on the set of LA VAMPIRE NUE.



Jean Rollin filming LA ROSE DE FER.

Jean Rollin and his former wife Simon on the set.

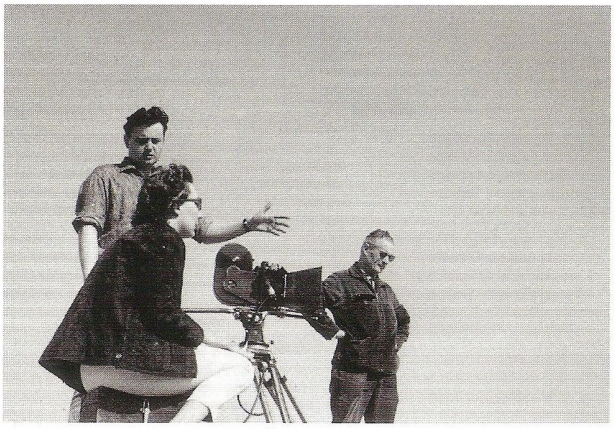


Rollin and singer & actor Félix Marten on the set of LES RAISINS DE LA MORT.

Rollin and his adoptive dauther Anissa Berkani-Rohmer on the set of LES DEUX ORPHELINES VAMPIRES.

Rollin & director of photography Jean-Jacques Renon acting in the tavern of LES DEMONIAQUES in Brussels.

Jean Rollin and Marie-Georges Pascal during the editing of LES RAISINS DE LA MORT.

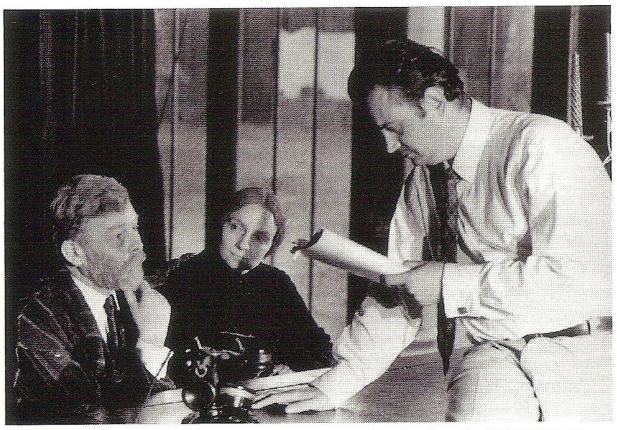


Rollin on the set of the unfinished L'ITINÉRAIRE MARIN.

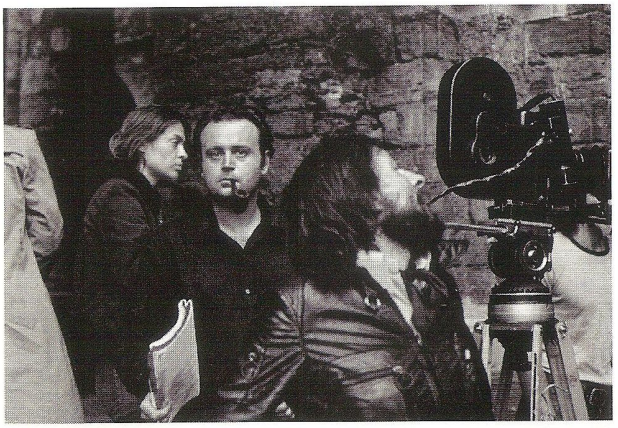
Rollin as an actor in Norbert Moutier's short EMOPHILIA.

Françoise Blanchard and Jean Rollin at the presentation of LA MORTE VIVANTE at the International Festival of Fantastic Films in Brusseles.

Brigitte Lahaie and Rollin on the set of LES ECHAPEES.



R.J. Chauffard, Natalie Perrey and Jean Rollin during the shooting of LA VAMPIRE NUE.



Scriptgril Claude Luquet, Rollin and actor Willy Braque during the shooting of LES DEMONIAQUES.

Rollin and his son Serge during the shooting of LEVRES DE SANG.

Miriam Watteau, Brigitte Lahaie and Rollin joking on the set of FASCINATION.

INTERVIEW WITH JEAN ROLLIN

How did you become interested in cinema?

I saw my very first film when I was about five years old, out in the country, during the second World War. It made a profound impression on me. It was CAPITAINE FRACASSE (1942) by Abel Gance. I particulary remember the storm sequence. I have never seen anything more fascinating and magically; it simply changed my live forever. My mother told me that, after the screening, I said I wanted to do exactly that when I grew up, so making films is a desire I´ve carried around with me for quite some time now.

Were your parents happy about your choice of vocation? The war years were a difficult time, when films were not commonly regarded as a respectable art form.

Well, you know how it is when children want to step into a certain profession. Nobody believed this was more than a temporary idea. Also, my father was an actor working in the theater, so that was also a heavy influence and helped. My parents were separated. I never lived with my father, but once in awhile, I went to the theater where he worked and saw him performing some of the classics on stage. Thus, my wish to step into an artistic profession didn´t appear to them as a curse. When I was 15 years old, my mother gave me a typewriter, because she thoght it might be useful if I knew how to use one. That was an important moment; that´s when everything started. I was found a means of expressing myself. I began to write little screenplays and storys, heavily influenced by the films I saw. I adored Cecil B. De Mille´s work, and when I was about 13 or 14, I became really obsessed with American serials. When I was a schoolboy, television didn´t yet exist, so after school, I regulary went to the movies with my friends. The cinema and comic books were our whole lives! We were playing them, talking about them, LIVING them.
I remember JUNGLE JIM (1948) with Johnny Weissmuller, also THE SHADOW (1940) and THE MYSTERIOUS DR. SATAN (1940). These were serials, always to be continued next week, so once an episode was over, nothing mattered but getting through the next week as quickly as possible! The serials were not just a special piece of culture; they also had a real spirit to them, which changed our lives and attitudes. I certainly know, that these events are the source for most of the ideas that recur throughout my films. The spirit, structure and contents of the serial is the key to my type of cinema. I worked from childhood memories, and even if I sometimes cannot name a film in particular, I know that all my ideas originated from that time.

Can you trace some specific examples?

The beach for example. That´s a motif often seen in my films. I don´t know exactly where I saw it first, but I am sure it was in one of this serials. The whole beginning of LES DEMONIAQUES (1973) , for example is a strange remembrance of the pirate and swashbuckler films I saw back then.

It's strange: most people directing and writing in the genre also work from childhood memories, but they usually don't have nice stories to tell. They seemed to have experienced awfull things as a child, which is the reason why they chose the genre as their medium.

My childhood was wonderful, and my reflections of it are very romantic, sweet and utterly transfigured. Like recalling one´s first love, 20 years later.

What were your first actual steps toward working professionally in the cinema?

When I was about 16 years old, I found a job at Le films de Saturne. I was just there to help, to write invoices and so forth, because I wanted to do something connected with the cinema. They specialized in creating opening and closing titles and little cartoons, but they also shot real films, industrial shorts and documentaries now and then. One day they were assigned to make a short documentary about Snecma, a big factory in France which builds motors for airplanes. I was part of the crew, so we went to the factory and started shooting. It was my first time on a real movie set with a camera and objects to be filmed. Of course it had no actors, no fictional story to tell, but it was enough to get me completely exited. It was a new world for me. I remember working very hard, although it didn´t seem to be work for me. I did everything: I arranged the travelling shots, laid the tracks, checked the electricity, helped the cameraman.

I've also heard that you worked as an editor in the French army?

That´s correct. When I did my military service, I worked in the cinema department together with Claude Lelouch, who had to join the Army at the same time as I did. We worked on army commercials there. He directed and I did the montage. We did two films. One was an documentary about the mechanographic service called MECHANOGRAPHIE; the other was a real film running one hour, with actors and a story, called LA GUERRE DE SILENCE ("The War of Silence").

It's hard to believe that you started as an editor. When I look at your films today, I never see montage being asserted as a stylistic device.

For me, montage is just a means to combine scenes, nothing more. I think the creation of a film should happen during the shooting. Since I began in this business as an editor, I know exactly where I want to have a cut, so I usually edit my films in camera. Later on, the editing process is just a formality for me. The scenes are shot in a certain way and it is impossible to arrange them differently. I never use a lot of cameras and shoot scenes from a variety of different angles to choose from afterwards. I hate that. For me, the creation of cinema should occur during the writing and shooting stage. Afterwards, we can rearrange a bit here and there, sure, but that´s about it. Also from a stylistic point of view, the montage is not particulary important to me. I very much prefer long scenes and plateaus. Editing is something completely abstract; it adds another dimension to the story, which I don´t really care about. I have chosen different ways, so for me, the editing is basically nothing but a reflection of the shooting process.

In 1958, you directed your first short film, LES AMOURS JAUNES ("The Yellow Lovers"). How did that happen?

After my army service, I wanted to shoot something on my own. Shortly before I had to join the army, I worked as an editor for a film company that produced newsreels. I was in the editing department, but of course, there was also an actual camera staff of six or seven operators, ready to go, whenever something happened. I made friends with one of them, and one day, he gave me one of his old cameras, a 35mm Maurigraphe (terribly heavy and complicated), so I could work with it over the weekend. Well, we made a film. We shot it on the beach near Dieppe, charging the cameras on the toilets there (laughs)! It was inspired by the French writer Tristan Corbiere. I am very fond of him. He is a sort of outsider. And maybe somebody really modern, ahead of his time, yet also very romantic and bound to the past. Someone between two worlds. I like his personality and attitude towards life very much.
I did my next short film in 1961. It was called CIEL DE CUIVRE ("Copper Sky"). It was quite surreal, telling a sentimental story; unfortunately, it wasn´t very good. I never finished it because I ran out of money, and also because I realized it wasn´t really working out. The footage is now lost. I have no idea where it might be.

One year later, you worked for the first (and also last) time as an assistant director. The film was Jean-Marc Thibault's UN CHEVAL POUR DEUX ("A Horse for Two", 1962).

That was not a particulary pleasant experience. I don´t think I am a very good assistant (laughs); I think it was enough to take this job only once. I came back from the army, I was just married, and I needed to work to make a living. Some friends of mine were running a theater at Montmatre, and they were also involved in producing films once in awhile. One day, they asked if I was interested in assisting Thibault and I agreed. I learned a lot of things on the set. Neverthless, it was an experience, which may have influenced my decision to approach cinema in a different way. I am basically a self taught filmmaker. Sure, I worked as an editor, but everything else I know about making films comes from doing it. Improvising, trying things, making mistakes and trying to make it better next time. It is an instinctive process for me. I have never seen the inside of a film school my entire life. I think I know how a traditional, classic film should be shot, what technique is required, but when I shot my first films, I tried to forget about that as much as possible. I wanted to work spontaneously, without any regulations in my head. I don´t believe, there is only one form of cinema, just because it has become the standard approach, and because most films are shot that way.

L´ITINERAIE MARIN (1960) was supposed to become your first feature film. You also had to abandon that project.

We shot one hour of usable film. Then we ran into some problems and needed professional help to shoot the remaining thirty minutes. I was looking for money and the possibility of a small distribution. I saw every professional working in the film buisness in Paris, but nobody cared. Marguerite Duras worked with me on that film. She was completely unknown at that time. Nowadays, that´s certainly different (laughs)! Then there was also Gaston Modot, who appeared in L'AGE D'OR, and Rene-Jacques Chauffard. The negative is in the lab, so maybe, one day, I will dig it out and do something with it. Perhaps a small video release. Michel Lagrange, one of the actors, has since become a well known writer. He died a few months ago and some people want to ressurect my film because of him.

The "Nouvelle Vague" became extremely popular at that time. Am I right to suspect that you were never really a follower of that movement? What was your atttitude towards these directors and their cinema?

I met most of them at Henri Langlois Cinemateque Francais; we talked, and I saw their films, but you´re right. It was not exactly my cup of tea. It was a movement similar to German New Wave filmmaking, some sort of rebellion agaist the old directors- not only their approach and vision, but also their technical style. I was always most attracted to traditional, old French cinema, but there is no doubt that the Nouvelle Vague played an important economic role. They proved it was possible for young people without expierience to make successful, acclaimed films on a small budget. They gave me and others the courage to attempt the same feat.

In the early 60s, you also became interested in politics. You did a short documentary about Generallisimo Francisco France called VIVRE EN ESPAGNE ("Life in Spain", 1964). How come you chose a Spaniard as your target?

I was part of the "left wing" at that time, and there was an organization here in France to help the spanish resistance against Franco. I knew them, and they asked me to do a short documentary, shot in Spain. I was interested, so we packed our camera equipment and went there. The resulting film, about thirty minutes, wasn´t very good, but we risked a great deal to get it made. There was another French crew shooting risky stuff in Madrid at that time; Frederic Rossif was making MOURIR A MADRID ("Dying in Madrid", 1964). I don´t know which company blew their cover first, but we suddenly found ourselves hunted by the police and we managed to cross the border back to France just in time. It was close, VERY close (laughs)!

It is curious, because you never really approached an openly political subject afterwards in your fantastic films, which are normally predestined to contain certain political ideas.

Well, the fantastic cinema is always a good vehicle for discussing certain political ideas in the form of symbols and metaphoras, but you´re right, I have never worked with political themes afterwards. Although, now that you mention it, I remember that, when LA NUIT DES TRAQUEES ("Night of the Hunted", 1980) opened here in Paris, a lot of people came to me and said I had made a film about the German prison problem. I am talking about Stammheim and the RAF. Looking back, I think it might be true. I didn´t do it conciously, but it was the same period, so it is absolutely possible. You know, those storys about solitary confinement, no light, nobody to talk to, no noises, everything very cold and sterile, and this is exactly what people saw in my film. Perhaps I was influenced to bring that to the screen. In general, the fantastic film is always political, because it is always in the opposition. It is subversive and it is popular, which means it is dangerous. I made films with sex and violence at a time when censorship was very strong, so that was certainly a political statement as well, although again, not a concious one. I just happen to have an imagination which doesn´t correspond with those of certain conservative people (laughs)!

Around the time of your Franco documentary, you also started publishing fiction. In which litereary style would you classify your writing?

I don´t know. I cannot really mention any specific authors which have influenced my style particulary. Sure, I adore Gaston Lereux and Corbiere, but they did not affect my writing on a stylistic level. I began writing books the way I was writing scripts. I am a very visual person, thus also a very visual writer. In films, I have something to show; in books, I want to convey the same thing, a world seen through my eyes, so I have to express the same vision with words. My books often appear like screenplays and they share the same rhythm and structure as my films.

So do you think of yourself as a director who writes, or as a writer who directs films?

It depends. I am not in the same state of mind when I write and when I make a film. I am of course, much more free when I write, because I don´t have to bother about anything. I just need paper and a typewriter. The creation is not the same, at least not when it comes to my kind of cinema. With a film, you have to consider that there are actors, who often don´t want the same things, you want; there are technicians, money problems, a producer, and you have to fight with all these elements. On a book, I only have to fight with my imagination. The visual world is much more open to surrealism and metaphysics. Cinema is a wonderful medium to express naivete and vagueness. And it is an adventure, where you just delve deeply into it and get carried away by the events and problems. The resulting film is a combination of yourself, your luck, your misfortune, your problems and your subconcious.
What was important for me, however, was to stick to the theatrical concept of improvisation in my books as well. It is the same journey with screenplays, books, or on the set. I write something and suddenly, off the cuff, I can improvise ten or twenty pages with things that just flood my mind.
I don´t know to which extent my work as a filmmaker has influenced my writings and vice versa. That´s something I might be able to tell you after I make my next film, LES DEUX ORPHELINES VAMPIRE ("The two Vampire Orphans"), because it will be based on one of my novels. It will also be interesting for me, because I´ve been extremely busy with my writing in recent years, and haven´t directed a feature for quite some times. I think a director who is also a writer pays attention to different details. That can be dangerous, but it can also make for a very strange film—in the positive sense.
It is true that writing directors make films which are much more personal and metaphysical, because cinema means that the writer must abandon one dimension. In books, you can talk to the reader, you can write down people´s thoughts. Film is more vague; you know what the charakters feel, and you try to convey these emotions visually. Curiously, I like to re-read my old books now and again, I don´t like looking back at my old films. I don´t know why, really; maybe because the fantasy in them has become fixed, which might have suited my imagination then but not now, so I am dissapointed. Cinema means to decide, to decide which actor to use, which set, which camera angle, and to eliminate all other possibilities in your head.

France is reknowned for its artistic and literary groups-the Surrealists, the Nouvelle Vague, the Nouveau Roman, and so forth. I get the impression that you formed something like that with people like Ado Kyrou and Eric Losfeld.

Many of these people came to the library of Eric Losfeld. I was one of them. I was very young and came to listen to what all those people were saying during the meetings. I was sitting in one dark corner, quiet and listening. I remember Ado Kyrou there, and Losfeld and Jaques Sternberg. One day, Losfeld looked at me and ordered me to come over to get into a conversation with them. That was the beginning. I was so proud to be there, to be able to speak with all these people, who were my heroes. Ado Kyrou was a very respected and important critic at this time. I read everything he wrote. We became close friends, and I came every saturday morning to the library to meet with them. For me, they represented the spirit of everything. They were incredibly cultured, and they shared the same attitude towards life as I did. We were of the same kind. I agreed with everything they said, everything they wrote rang true for me.
When I was among them, I felt at home and understood. Eric Losfeld intended to publish my first novel, LES PAYS LOINS ("The Distant Lands"), which never happened, because he died. I had two things going with Losfeld. First, he wanted to publish this novel of mine, then there was this strange French writer named George Maxwell, who wrote a series of 22 very bizarre books., and Losfeld had the rights, so we wanted to reprint them with an introduction by myself. I was also supposed to do the cover photographies.

In 1965 you made a short film called LES PAYS LOINS: Did you do it because the book was never published?

No, no. I just used the title. The story got nothing to do with my novel, which was basically written in the form of an essay.

In 1967, you also got involved in comics. I am talking about SAGA OF XAM.

Eric Losfeld had published the first adult comic in France, BARBARELLA, by Jean-Claude Forest. It was extremely successful, so he wanted to publish more adult comics. One of my friends was Nicolas Deville, and he was responsible for the decoration of some of my short films. We were very close, and I knew he was a fabulous painter. I encouraged him to propose something to Losfeld, so I arranged a meeting and it worked out. We did SAGA OF XAM together. It was a little science fiction story about a girl from outer space coming down to earth to experience a lot of strange adventures. I also met Phillipe Druillet around the same time. He would later play in LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE (The Rape of the Vampire, 1967) and created the posters for some of my films.

Around this time, you wrote a lengthy essay about Gaston Leroux which appeared in the final two issues of the famous magazine MIDI-MINUIT FANTASTIQUE.

I was always an admirer of Leroux. I read his works when I was very young and he certainly influenced me a great deal in my decision to make genre films. I think that, at that time, his approach to literature was very close to my approach to making films. I wrote that essay on Leroux as some sort of exercise. I never expected it to be published. Losfeld looked at it and liked it, so he published the thing. At the end of that essay, there is an excerpt from a screenplay, signed "Michel Gentil", which would later become my pseudonym I used for my hardcore films. That was just a joke. I only wrote those few pages especially for the essay.

After that, you finally made your first feature film: LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE. Why did you abandon your writing career at this point? Obviously, you had good connections with publishers and other writers?

It was always my intention to make films. That was my first love. I was working in that newsreel company, and during holidays, I took some money, which I had saved and began filming. First I made the aforementioned LES PAYS LOINS, and right after that, I began LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE, which was also a short film in the beginning. It was only half an hour long.
This is a very weird story. Originally, that film was supposed to be the extension of an American horror film, a PRC film called DEAD MAN WALK (1943), starring George Zucco and Dwight Frye. Jean Lavie, a young distributor and a good friend of mine, told me he had bought this very film and it was supposed to be shown in the Scarlett and Midi-Minuit theaters in Paris, two cinemas specializing in this type of cinema, but they couldn´t show it, because it was too short, scarcely an hour long. He proposed to me that I shoot about thirty minutes of film, so they could add it and show the film without problems.
I spoke with Sam Selsky and told him that, if he would finance these thirty minutes, we´d have a contract and distributor immediately and that it would be shown in a couple of popular cinemas in Paris. He agreed and we did it.

How did you meet Sam Selsky, the producer of most of your subsequent films?

Selsky is a European American, so to speak: he´s lived in France for a long time. He has been to every corner in the world, but eventually ended up in Paris, working as an administrator for UNESCO. He loved the cinema, so one day, he bought a little movie theatre and also got into production. I doubt that he otherwise would have touched the project. I don´t know why he chose to work with me. Just a good feeling maybe. He trusted me, and he was the first one to do so. At that time , I was trying to raise money for films, but nobody gave me a chance, because I had no real experience. Selsky believed in me. Also, it was just half an hour of film, so it was not too much of a financial risk, and I managed to convice him. And then he said, like a perfect businessman, that if we could make half an hour of film for practically nothing- knowing that it was preferable to have a complete feature in hand rather than a short. There was also the consideration that my friend, the distributor, at that particular moment, was broke and that our 30 minute film might never see the light of day because of that. Thus we had to add a second part to LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE, entitled LA REINE DES VAMPIRES ("Queen of the Vampires"). Selsky, who is quite a materialistic person, said that the film was so strange, so absurd, it was possible that the audience would like it. He understood absolutely nothing of the story, but it was so bizarre he believed it could be successful. And he was right, it made quite some money.
Of course it was also a terrible scandal. After the film had opened in four Paris cinemas to very extreme audience reactions, I said I would never make another film. I absolutely didn´t expect this reaction; it hit me like a bolt from the blue! People were shouting, throwing trash at the screen. The press went crazy and called me a madman, they called the film the work of crazy students! I was really afraid they are going to lynch me. Some members of the cast and crew freaked out, as well. They hated it, and shouted at me as if I had commited a crime. And I didn´t realize at all what I had done after shooting. Now, when I see the film again, I realize how crazy it was to do sommething like that at this moment in time, with all the student riots in the streets of Paris. It is very much a film of its time, Although I never wanted it to be like that and I didn´t realize it back then. I know now that my enviroment influences me a great deal, even if I´m not aware of it, which is also the reason why I told you the story of Stammheim. I really think there could be a connection, just as there is a connection between LE VIOL... and its time of creation.
Sam Skelsky arranged a special screening for the Moulin brothers, the owners of the Midi.Minuit, the Scarlett, and some other cinemas in the same mold. He knew that it was impossible to understand what the hell was going on in the story, so during the screening, he was constantly talking to them, disturbing their concentration. So, whenever they say they couldn´t understand why this or that happened, Selsky replied that they had missed a very important plot twist because of his talking and that they shouldn´t worry because it made perfect sense! (laughs)

Would you say that LA VIOL DU VAMPIRE was the most improvisational of your films?

Yes, that one, but also LES TROTTOIRS DE BANGKOK ("Sidewalks of Bangkok", 1984). Some critics wrote that I made two films in my career that are virtually identical: LE VIOL... and LES TROTTOIRS..., and they might be right. When we did LE VIOL..., I was quite serious about it, but when I did LES TROTTOIRS..., I took a tongue-in-cheek approach. But both films stem from the same love for a certain type of cinema and both are definetely honest films. Even the soundtrack of LE VIOL... was improvised! François Trusques was one of the very first French musicians to play free jazz and I adore jazz, so it was clear I wanted that type of music for the film. You can see Francois together with his group in the theatre sequence. We shot it in the Grand Guignol theatre during their final active period. I loved their work and I always wanted to do something connected with them.

Was the vampire motif forced on you by the scenario of DEAD MAN WALK?

No, that was a coincidence. Everybody knew I loved that type of film and that I always wanted to shoot something like that.

You are obviously fascinated by vampires. What makes them so special for you? You nevery really cared about Frankenstein, werewolves or mummies.

That´s difficult to answer. I don´t really know. Maybe because the vampire can be attractive, and certainly also because it gave me the possibility to show nice girls wearing not very much (laughs)! An erotic werewolf or an erotic mummy... I don´t think so. Maybe it´s also got something to do with my nature and the nature of my films.
A vampire is like an animal, a predator—wild, emotional, naive, primitive, sensual, not too concerned with logic, driven by emotions, but also very aesthetic and beautiful, and these are terms also often used when my films are being described. At least when they are being described by my admirers (laughs)!

Since LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE, you have been stereotyped as a director of erotic vampire films. Are you happy with that?

Honestly, I don´t care. Some people say I´m a genius, other consider me the greatest moron who ever stepped behind a camera.

I have heard so many things about me and my films, but these are just opinions. I am perfectly happy with what I do, because it has always been my choice.

LA VAMPIRE NUE ("The Nude Vampire", 1969) was your first color film. The animal masks in it are very reminiscent of Franju's JUDEX.

Of course Judex inspired me a lot, and also the concept of surrealism in general. It´s funny, because for my second film, I really wanted to do something a little more temperate than LE VIOL... . I wanted to make a well done, traditional mystery film. Looking back on it now, why, it´s not a classical film at all. It is exactly the same kind of film as LE VIOL...! (laughs) Not so delirious maybe, but it certainly has the same spirit. Well, it´s a Rollin film. You mentioned the colors. I often hear that my use of color bears a certain signature. I never thought of that while I was making the films. I am responsible for the way my films are lighted, but I also had big problems with my director of photography, Jean-Jaques Renon, because he had a vision of his own which he wanted to realize. That became even more evident on LE FRISSON DES VAMPIRES (Thrill of the Vampires, 1970), where the colors are even more important and flamboyant.

LA VAMPIRE NUE was your first collaboration with the twins Catherine and Marie-Pierre "Pony" Castel, who became regulars in your subsequent work.

Oh yes! They are the only twins to be found in French cinema, and they´ve done vampire films and porn together (laughs)! They were originally hairdressers. One of my assistans came to me one day and told me that he´d found a pair of twins who might interest me, so I met with them. They wanted to be actresses, a dream they had for quite some time. They had a certain naive quality that I felt would be ideal for my type of cinema. It was very difficult to get the two of them at the same time. Originally I wanted to have them both in LE FRISSON..., but one of them (Marie-Pierre) was pregnant, so we could use only one and had to find that beautiful Asian substitute for the other. After REQUIEM POUR UN VAMPIRE ("Requiem for a Vampire", 1971), the other one (Catherine) was pregnant, so once again there was the problem! I don´t know whatever became of them. One of them was living not far from here, but I haven´t seen her for quite some time now.

You are basically the only director in France making genre films. Whenever French fantasy cinema is mentioned, your name is always dropped as well. Do you think your films can be seen as proper examples of French fantastic culture?

I don´t think it can be said that I am a representative of French fantastic culture per se. My films are melting pots of American pulp films and a certain amount of German Expressionism. I was definetely influenced by the Expressionist films of Robert Wiene. Not neccessarily the CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI, but I remember THE HANDS OF ORLAC. All that, and of course the films of the great period of British filmmaking and many other things I cannot name because I don´t conciously realize how much they influenced me. Also, there is certainly a heavy dose of my own personality involved. I am French, so there are certainly a lot of French things to be found in them. It is not particulary French culture , it is particulary ROLLIN (laughs)!
It´s very difficult to answer that question, you know, because there isn´t really a French tradition of fantastic cinema. I guess what you mean is that certain cultural bond that exists within a country´s cinema, such as the reflection of the Weimar Republic and the early shades of fascism in German Expressionist cinema, or Catholicism in the Italian cinema, right?

Exactly.

Well, as far as France is concerned, I would have to name literature as the basic of our fantastic culture. The French cinema, as a rule is NOT fantastic. There are no roots. Also, I don´t think French people in general like the fantastic, at least not what I consider to be fantastic. Sure, we have a couple of magazines dedictated to horror films, but they survive because they print gory stills and that´s what attracts people. These are two different pairs of shoes for me.

It was obvious from your early films that you weren't at all concerned with popular trends and did pretty much your own thing. That's also the case when you made more »commercial« horror films such as LES RAISINS DE LA MORT ("The Grapes of Death", 1978) or LA MORTE VIVANTE ("The Living Dead Girl", 1982). Did you always intend to remain a maverick, an outsider to the French film industry, or did you have hopes of breaking into more commercial areas of the film business?

I don´t think it could have worked, and I realized that. I knew I had to remain in my parallel world, because anything else would have resulted in a disaster. The films I make are impossible with a normal production. They have to be marginal. I certainly was tempted to try to make a big film with big stories and big stars, but I´m not sure I could make a good film like that. You know, Bunuel was a bit like that. When he had to shoot a film with no money and no professional actors, somewhere in the desert, like NAZARIN, he managed to create a masterpiece. When he had a reasonable budget, the result was not exactly the same. Maybe we share the same kind of imagination. My imagination is too strong to completely abandon what is important to me. Also, I don´t think I am a universal director. I don´t think I could direct comedies, for example. I simply cannot escape from myself. I have to fight with the money, that´s better for me, that´s the type of cinema I grew up with. The difficulties I encounter during production oblige me to invent, to become really creative. I think it´s in these moments that my cinematic universe becomes a reality. Anything else would be dishonest and a waste of time and energy.

LE FRISSON DES VAMPIRES was heavily influenced by the trappings of the hippie movement.

To a certain extent, yes. I thought it would be nice to work that in. I liked the music of the group Acanthus very much. Jean-Phillipe Delamarre, the brother of my assistant Jean-Noelle, had a little music publishing company. One day, he told me that there were these young schoolboys who had formed a group and liked the fantastic cinema, and that they wanted to work with me. That´s how we got together. They separated right after and never did anything else again. They disappeared.

What about the film's leading actress, Sandra Julien? She was incredibly beautiful...

...and not too clever, I must tell you (laughs)! She was a model and, you´re right, very beautiful. She also appeared in a couple of other French films at that time. We were looking for a girl to play the leading part, which was not exactly easy. It was a vampire film with erotic scenes, and that didn´t sound particulary enticing to a lot of actresses. I worked with Sandra´s husband, Pierre Julien, who was a technician on LE FRISSON... and JEUNES FILLES IMPUDIQUES (Young Girls Without Shame, 1973), a sex film I did a few years later. He suggested Sandra, we made a screen test and she was perfect.
The last day of shooting turned into a big mess. We were a little drunk, I have to admit, and we were shooting the scene where the vampire is killed at the beginning of the film. I had the brilliant idea that the castle would start bleeding after the death of the vampire. We made a mixture of red wine, paint and other ingredients and threw it against the walls. The problem was, it stayed there and we couldn´t get it off again! I guess it is still there (laughs)! The owner of the castle was not exactly happy, as you can imagine. We even called the fire department and they tried their best with a powerful water jet, but it was useless...

What about the additional scenes, which can be found in an American version of the film?

When I first heard of them, I was sure somebody else had shot and inserted them afterwards. I saw that version recently and it´s strange, but these scenes are familar to me. I think the producer shot some additional footage for foreign territorities- South America, in particular, I think. I only directed a little sequence inside the cemetery at Clichy, the love scene on the grave. Just a very small scene. I remember I did that, but all the other scenes were done by somebody else. I was only there as an spectator. They would have never allowed us to shoot such an explicit sex scene inside a cemetery, so we lied to the caretakers about what we were going to do in there. Because it was late at night, there was only one cemetery guard around, and Natalie Perrey went to him with a couple of liquor bottles and kept him "entertained" and distracted. Something very funny happened during the shooting of that scene. The motorway passes the cemetery up on a hill and we checked to see if motorists might see what was going on down there. There was some sort of fence, so we figured they couldn't see, so we

started filming. What we didn´t take into account was the elevation of trucks. The truck drivers could see everything!
During the shooting we looked up by accident and there was this incredible traffic jam, with countless trucks backed up on the motorway to enjoy the show!

I wonder why these extra scenes were not used for other world markets. It's obviously more commercial—more sex, more violence.

Yes, but the censorship in France was very strict at that time. And honestly, the film didn´t need them. What we had was enough and I didn´t want that stuff to be put in. I don´t like it. I don´t know what became out of this material. Maybe it is in the lab, but I doubt it. I guess it is destroyed. Not much of a loss if you ask me. Monique Natan, the producer of that film, wanted to produce another vampire film with Sandra Julien immediately afterwards, called DOCTEUR VAMPIRE ("Dr. Vampire"). That title was her idea and she announced it, so nobody else could use it. I was supposed to write a script but unfortunately, she died before the project could become a reality.

Tell me something about the history of REQUIEM POUR UN VAMPIRE, one of your most successful films.

During the shooting of LE FRISSON..., I met Lionel Wallmann. He was an American in charge of selling the film in foreign countries. We became friends, and he asked me, "Why don´t we try to raise the money for a film together?" I wrote a screenplay, he found money and arranged something with Sam Skelsky. The result was REQUIEM..., a little film made with almost no money. I like it very much, because I tried something different. I think there is no dialogue in the film for the first forty minutes; I wanted to create the ultimate naive film, to simplify story, direction, cinematographie, everything. Like a shadow, an idea of an plot. Later, 1972. I made an even more extreme film in that mode, called LA ROSE DE FER ("The Iron Rose"). I wanted to make a film that was like a fairytale told by someone at the campfire, invented as it was being told. I wrote the script without a plan, without construction, and that´s also the way I shot it.

What about your use of symbols? Clowns, for example, appear quite often in your films—in LA ROSE DE FER, REQUIEM..., and LES DEMONIAQUES. Yet I don't think you have a special affection for the circus.

No, not in particular. These are just ideas, images which represent an emotion. I also put them into my films to add an element of the strange and absurd. It´s like a mask. For REQUIEM...., I had some ideas and put them in the screenplay for no special reason. First the clowns, then the motorcycle, and the idea of the girls playing piano in a cemetery. The first vision I had was two clowns playing piano at a cemetery. I have never seen that in a film before and I wanted to see it, so I just wrote it in. I reused the imagine of the clown in other films as some sort of quotation. I like that; I often make references to my earlier films. It connects dreams and storys like a construction system and the audience can make their own thing out of it.

You are talking about very ambitious things, yet your films were hardly treated seriously, either by audiences or by critics. Weren't you incredibly frustrated at times? Didn't you feel misunderstood? Just look at the retitlings of some of your films in certain countries!

Do you mean CAGED VIRGINS for REQUIEM... in the United States or SEXUAL TERROR OF THE UNLEASHED VAMPIRE for LE FRISSON... in Germany? (laughs)! I never really understood what audiences thought about my films. REQUIEM... was fairly successful here in France. During one screening, I sat in the audience to listen to what the people say about it. Some just came because of the nudity, some came because it was a vampire film, and some came because they wanted to see something unusual and bizarre. There is no typical audience for my films, and this leaves me in a kind of vacuum. Do you know what I mean? I often had the impression that I did what I was doing solely for myself. As far as retitlings are concerned, certainly it is quite embarrassing, but there is nothing I can do about it. I mean, I was happy that one of my films was shown in another country at all- a sold CAGED VIRGINS is better than an unsold REQUIEM POUR UN VAMPIRE!

Is it true that Lionel Wallmann was responsible for your attempts at straight sex fare with JEUNES FILLES IMPUDIQUES?

That´s right. Lionel obliged me to put some sex scenes in REQUIEM... during the dungeon sequence. I told him that I wasn´t too fond of that kind of thing, and he answered:" But you do that kind of thing very well. If we made an entire film like that, I bet it would be successful. You may not like it but you know how to do it."
I said," Okay, I´ll do it, but I won´t invest any of my own money into it." Well, he raised the money, we made the film, and he was right. The two sex films I made, this one and TOUT LE MONDE IL EN A DEUX (1974) were very successful.

TOUT LE MONDE... was later reissued under the title BACCHANALES SEXUELLES with hardcore inserts. Did you direct these scenes.

I have never seen this version, so I don´t know what scenes were in it. I never shot any hardcore scenes for that film, but we went to the very limit of softcore because Lionel wanted to have something really spectacular and porno wasn´t legal at that time. We did two different versions of that film. For one, which was eventually released as TOUT LE MONDE..., I cut out certain scenes which I considered too long, or a bit too explicit. Thus, I don´t know if this reissue is simply the original cut, or a version spiced up with real hardcore inserts filmed by someone else. Should the latter be the case, I don´t have anything to do with it.

It is said that you had a lot of problems on LES DEMONIAQUES because it was a Belgian coproduction.

We had to change everything because of that. We had to get Belgian actors and technicians. It was our first co-production and my largest budget up to that time. Even with the Belgian money involved, we were close to leaving it unfinished. There was one week of shooting ahead of us, and we had absolutely no money left. We were in despair and really didn´t know how to go on. So we all went into a little bar where the director of photographie got drunk every night. They were selling lottery tickets there, and that night, they had only one ticket left. Lionel bought it, just for fun, and he won about 100.000 Francs! We were saved!
But that´s only one story. I had terrible problems, because during the first week of shooting, Lionel, who was producing for his company, Nordia Film, stayed in Paris to check the rushes, which we sent him from the little island where we were shooting. We booked a little castle on the island, which belonged to Lois Renault of the automobile company. There were numerous free rooms and an old keeper and we stayed there for the whole time. After Lionel saw the rushes, he rushed to the island immediately and said that everything we had done so far was absolutely dreadful and unuseable, and that we would have to shoot everything again! I was very disappointed and I didn´t understand what was going on. So there I was, sitting on this island, feeling the pressure of having turned the efforts of an entire week into unusable crap. When I finally saw the rushes myself, I was quite surprised, because everything was fine and perfectly usable. It was exactly what I wanted! Lionel didn´t understand the difference between rushes and finished film, and so he learned the importance of adding sound and music.
I also had a lot of problems with two actresses who were supposed to play the leading parts. We found two very attractive, young girls who worked in an office near mine, and I offered them the parts. Everything was fine until somebody told them that, if they made a film with me, I would make them walk the streets as prostitutes to raise money for the film´s financing! And they believed it! I never found out who did it. As you see, I had a very bad reputation at that time, and my films were also infamous, which certainly did not help.
We shot the film on this little island, and once every year, there is a big equinox and in this period, about one week, no boat can leave or reach the island. Of course it happened exactly when we were there (laughs)! All of a sudden, we found ourselves prisoners on the island. No restaurant, no hotel, nothing! We had to cook for ourselves. The only thing we had were those crabs. We had bought dozens, because we needed them for the film. So, when we were done with them, Lionel (who is an excellent cook) prepared them for us and we all ate crabs for one week! As you can imagine, after that, none of us was interested in looking at crabs a very long time! So there you have another great story which helped my reputation! Rollin is the only director who eats his actors after filming them (laughs)!

Actor Willy Braque had a very peculiar reputation.

He was completely crazy during this period. He also tried directing several times, but never managed to finish his films. He prepared

everything, the screenplays were quite good, but as soon as the camera began rolling, he freaked out and couldn´t go on. What can I say? He went mad, first he and than his poor producers (laughs)!

José Benazeraf is said to have seen LES DEMONIAQUES and likes it so much that he introduced you to Mylene D'Antes, who starred in your film PHANTASMES (»The Seduction of Amy«, 1975).

Yes, she had worked with him before, I met Benazeraf a couple of times. He is not really a friend, but I like him. He is really a weird person. I know that Brigitte Lahaie is not so fond of him; he is said to behave strangely with women on set, but I cannot comment on that, as I have never seen him directing a film.

When LES DEMONIAQUES opened in France, porno was legalized. Since you already mentioned your dislike of sex scenes for REQUIEM..., I guess you were not one of those directors who thought porno might be a new »genre« where one could explore new possibilities?

Actually, I did think so at the time, I was sure that, with this type of film, one could come up with something new and of interest. I tried with Phantasmes but failed miserably. The reason for the death of French "hardcore culture," if you want to use that term, is that the audience just doesn't care. They don't want cinema, they want people screwing and that's it. That's why after Phantasmes, I made my porn films in a rather uninspired way. I was very dissapointed with the failure of that film. I really tried to make something out of it and nobody gave a damn.
It was a porno with a real story, with real direction and real actors. The Castel twins were in it again, for example. Knowing what I know now, I would say it is impossible to turn pornographie in something of interest. There is simply no market. I don´t like the other porn films I did, tha´t´s true, but I enjoyed shooting them. I made the acquaitance of a lot of very interesting people and I have respect for them. Today, the actors only do it for money, but back then, it was something different. Some of them did it because they wanted to explore their desires, some because they wanted to enter the film buisness, but they all had something in common. They were proud of what they did, like a little group of outsiders, because they did something which most people did´n´t dare to do. It was some sort of rebellion, a statement, and it was honest.

What were your feelings about shooting hardcore? I can imagine it was a rather awkward experience.

It´s not so difficult, because the people playing in porno films are usually no trained actors and they like what they were doing, especially back then. It was a very nice atmosphere and everybody behaved very naturally. All we had to do was to film the action. It´s strange, but it was more embarassing for me to shoot my first softcore film, TOUT LE MONDE...; I walked off the set one day because I couldn´t direct phony lovemaking. When it became real, I had no problem at all. I really don´t know why. Maybe because in softcore films, the only person revealing his obsession is the director, because he has to call the shots while the actors simply do as they are told. In porno, both the actor and the director are in the same position. One reveals his obsession, and the actors live them out, so there is nothing to be ashamed of.

Without a doubt, LA ROSE DE FER is your least commercial film and a very risky experiment as well. I think it's one of your best films, but I can also imagine the difficulties of making a film about two people walking around who are locked in a closed cemetery.

I knew it would be a commercial desaster. I knew it from the very beginning, but I didn´t care. At that moment, it was very important to me to make a very serious, profound film, far away from the softcore stuff, I´ve done previously. The story of that film was based on a short story I wrote, about six or seven pages long, which I published in a little magazine.
I had a lot of problems with the leading actor, Hugues Quester. He didn´t like me, which was quite a problem, because there are only two persons in the film, so we had to work together all the time. This eventually led to him to take his name off the film, so Hugues Quester is credited as "Pierre Dupont". I financed the picture completely with my own personal money, knowing that I would never get it back, but I had a safety net in mind. I knew I would loose everything, but Impex Film had offered me a deal to direct six or seven hardcore films in the next couple of years. Therefore I knew, even though I wouldn´t have a penny left after making that film, I would have plenty of work and get it back because of this porno assignement. So I made LA ROSE DE FER without any hesistation. I love this film very much. It is definetely one of my most personal efforts.

This has also been said about LEVRES DE SANG (»Lips of Blood«, 1974).

The original script certainly, but the resulting film... well, it´s like my other films. I had a really complex story in mind, with a lot of structure. I had a lot of problems because I lost one week of shooting. I was given four weeks, and on the very first day on the set, one of the producers backed out, so one entire week had to be cancelled. We had to rearrange and shorten things drastically from one day to the next, so I tried to keep all the sequences, which were important to me, while getting rid of many others which were important to the film´s structure and rhythm, so it certainly suffered in the end.

LES RAISINS DE LA MORT is one of the very few French gore films. Was it your idea?

No, the idea came from Jean-Marc Ghanassia, a young producer who was also involved in LEVRES DE SANG. He lost everything on that one, so he wanted me to make a film that would yield some profit for him. It was the time of the desaster films, and he wanted something similar, something present in our everyday lives which suddenly turns dangerous and lethal. I proposed wine and tobacco. He chose the former, so we made LES RAISINS DE LA MORT. It was the first non-erotic film I made with Brigitte Lahaie. I directed her previously in a porn film, VIBRATIONS SENSUELLES (SENSUAL VIBRATIONS, 1976), and I found her to be a distinctly different personality. I thought it would be interesting to take her outside the boundaries of porn and put her in a Rollin film. She was different, very different and she has an incredible charisma. Her presence is absolutely striking. Also, I think she is very talented and a very nice person.
We shot in a deserted mountain region here in France, called Cévennes, and it was so incredibly cold, that we had to build a special shelter for the camera because otherwise it wouldn´t turn at 24 frames per second. I remember the scene in which Brigitte had to undress herself. There she was, naked and supposed to deliver her lines, but when she opened her mouth she literally couldn´t speak because it was so cold. It was very, very hard on everybody. No coffee, no place to get warm, and Brigitte kept her temper remarkably well. There is one scene with Brigitte and the dogs which is my homage to Mario Bava´s BLACK SUNDAY. She reminded me a lot of Barbara Steele; her face is also very enigmatic. One might think directing a porn actress would be difficult, but she was very disciplined and professional. It was a pleasure to direct her. She was interested in breaking into the normal film business and she actually managed to create a second career. She is very popular here in France, writing books, appearing on TV and also acting in live theatre sometimes.

After the extreme gore of LES RAISINS..., you returned to a more familiar style with FASCINATION (1979), an erotic vampire film of sorts. It's one of your best known and best-liked films; what can you tell about its origin?

The title and general flair of that film is an homage to an French magazine of the same name, dedictated to all kinds of eroticism in art, which was edited by my friend Jean-Pierre Bouxyou, who also worked with me on LES RAISINS DE LA MORT and LA MORTE VIVANTE.
It was shot inside an old, elegant and very luxurious chateau, with a discrete entrance through the woods, which was reknowned as a haven for rich people who wanted to spend some intimate time with their spouse or lovers. My co-producer wanted me to make a very explicit sex film- straight exploitation fare without too much emphasis on the fantastical elements—so we had a constant battle during shooting (which I won eventually, much to the disappointement of my "enemy") (laughs)! I got the idea for the film from a French short story, Jean Lorrain´s "Un verre de sang" (A Glass Of Blood), where I learned for the first time about wealthy French people at the turn of the century drinking the blood of bulls as a curative for anemia.
I like FASCINATION very much. It is very close to what I envisioned, very romantic and savage at the same time. It has a truly enigmatic, predatory atmosphere and some great images, such as Brigitte Lahaie wielding the scythe, or the opening scene in the slaughterhouse. It´s quite arty, and although it´s a vampire film, it pretty much avoids the pulp ideas which I usually work into my scripts.

Let's talk about a very special film which is not exactly a high-light in your curriculum vitae: LE LAC DES MORTES VIVANTS ("Zomble Lake", 1980). Jess Franco was supposed to direct this Eurocine project, so how come you ended up becoming becoming the scapegoat?

(Laughs) Well, Jess Franco just didn´t show up. That´s all. It was the day before shooting and nobody knew where he was. No trace of him, nothing. I was about to go on holiday when the phone rang. It was the production company, Eurocine, who asked if I was interested shooting a film for them. I said: "Why not? When do you need me?" and they replied "You start tomorrow". I didn´t read the script, I knew nothing about the film except that it was over zombies, and the producer explained to me each morning what I was supposed to shoot. I never took this project seriously. Howard Vernon was in that one. He knew what type of film he was appearing in, and I knew what type of film I was directing, so we had a lot of fun. Eurociné is really a weird company. I am not 100% sure, but I think they really believe in what they are doing. I mean, I believe they think films like ZOMBIE LAKE are good horror films! They live on another planet! It is so weird, it is good. I also did some other things for them—some more zombie footage which, from what I have heard, was used to spice-up another Jess Franco film. (Rollin´s footage was added to Franco´s A VIRGIN AMONG THE LIVING DEAD, 1970—ED.)
And then there was CHASING BARBARA, a short which I shot in Madrid in the frontgarden of my hotel (laughs)! Of course, this was supposed to represent a jungle! "See those flowerpots? Let´s shoot a jungle epic in there" (laughs)!

What do you think about Jess Franco? Your style is sometimes compared to his.

I met him once in the office of Eurociné. I don´t think it is appropriate to compare his films with mine. We have completely different views of cinema, I think, and also our working styles are very different. It´s not the same spirit. I haven´t seen many of his films. I´ve liked some of them, but I cannot see a connection between the two of us.

In 1983, you directed LA MORTE VIVANTE. Theresa Ann Savoy was originally supposed to play the title role. Why did she drop out?

I went to Rome to see Theresa. The very first time we saw each other in her agent´s office, she said she would never work with me under any circumstances. I don´t know why. I think she was slightly out of her mind (laughs)! I was very disappointed, because it was a dream of mine to make a film with her. I saw her in a couple of films and liked her very much. We eventually cast Françoise Blanchard for that role.
The shooting was terribly hard for Françoise. She collapsed during the final scene; the one where she has to kill her girlfriend and is covered with blood. The stench of the fake blood was awful, she was tired and the shoot was quite complicated; I sensed thar something terrible would happen sooner or later. When she had to freak out in front of the camera for the final shot, everybody was silent after I said "cut" because nobody was sure wheter she was acting or collapsing for real. Everybody stared at her until she looked at us in surprise and said: " Well, are we finished now, or what?" Unfortunately we were not finished yet, and later, she collapsed for real on the entrance stairs of the castle, from sheer exhaustion. We called a doctor, so there she was, naked and covered with fake blood, and the doctor- an innocent guy from the countryside- was on the verge of calling the police, because he suspected we were a bunch of psychopaths holding nasty orgies in the castle. We told him that the blood wasn´t real, but he only believed us when Françoise assured him "I´m not a human sacrifice, I´m just dead on my ass!" (laughs)!
Marina Pierrot was also in that film, who played in Walerian Borowczyk´s DR JEKYLL ET LES FEMMES. I enjoyed working with her, although I have to say she was very vain and was more preoccupied with her appeareance than anything else. I had a lot of discussions with her, because she thought I wasn´t presenting her properly on the screen.

Are you pleased they way the film turned out?

Mmmmh, yes...I think there are some very good things in it. Of course, we had to make certain commercial concessions. The whole idea of the chemical waste wasn´t very good, it was just thrown in for better or worse. It would have been better if this girl had come back from the dead because her girlfriend hadn´t kept her end of their suicide part. However, commercially, it was the most successful film I ever made. I even won the Special Audience Prize for it at the Fantafestival in Rome. I like very much the part in which the living dead girl returns to the castle and finds all these toys and telephones her friend. It was interesting to do that. Maybe we should have enlarged this part. An American writer was there to translate the dialogue into English, and eventually he shot a few of the English spoken scenes with the American actors. Mike Marshall is in it, the son of French actress Michele Morgan and Bill Marshall.

You previously mentioned LES TROTTOIRS DE BANGKOK. Was this your long overdue homage to the serials you loved so much as a child?

Correct. It´s a very small film, but I like it a great deal. It was really difficult to find a suitable actress for the leading role. I was seeing actresses for weeks, but I just couldn´t find that type of heroine I was looking for. It really became a problem, so Lionel told me that he knew an Asian girl who would be perfect. Then the first day of shooting came; I still had no leading actress, and we all were waiting for Lionel to come and bring the girl along. We were shooting at a harbor, and then, Lionel´s car appeared in the distance. Everybody was happy, but when he got closer I saw that he was alone. "That´s it," I thought. "We´re finished." The car stopped and suddenly the front passenger door opened and there she was: Yoko. She was so small that she remained invisible inside car. And she was just perfect. I knew from the first moment I saw her that she was exactly what I had envisioned.

There is some confusion about a film called NE PRENDS PAS LES POULETS POUR DES PIGEONS (1985). Sometimes, it is said that you only wrote the screenplay and that the leading actor, Jean-Claude Benhamou, directed. Again, you are named onscreen as director.

No, I really did it. Benhamou was the producer, writer and lead actor, so now, he sometimes seems to confuse things and claims to have directed, as well. That said, it was completely his story. It was only a technical direction. I only did what he wanted me to do, because I really didn´t care.

You also finished EMANUELLE 6 (1987), reportedly because director Bruno Zincone ran into some problems?

He couldn´t cope with shooting in South America. When Zincone came back after six weeks of filming in Venezuela, he had only 45 minutes of usable film. To make things worse, he couldn´t go back and finish it because he had another job to do right afterwards. Sam Selsky, the producer, needed the film to be finished as soon as possible because of the availability and cost of the actors, and also because of fixed agreements with the distributor. I was asked to finish it, so I rewrote the script, came up with the idea of Emanuelle having lost her memory, and tried to make some sense of the whole thing, which was quite a hopeless attempt.

PERDUES DANS NEW YORK ("Lost in New York", 1989) was made for TV.

A friend of mine, Jaques Nahun, a TV producer needed some stock shots of New York. He asked me if I could take care of that, so he gave me lots and lots of 16 mm negative material and some money, and I went over there and shoot what he needed. While I was in New York, I came up with the idea to use this occasion and make a little film for myself.
When I showed the results to Jaques, he liked it and said we could try to make something out of it. He allowed me to keep the material, and gave me some more money, so I constructed an hour long story around the material. It´s the story of two girls who find the story of an American goddess, which allows them to travel through time and space, and also the worlds of film and literature. We tried to sell it on a TV channel, but nobody wanted to have it.
It´s a very beautiful film and I think it is a little gem that deserves to be seen. I made it at a time when I seriously considered abandoning the cinema because of the dreadful production circumstances. In a way, PERDUES DANS NEW YORK was supposed to be my good-bye to everybody who stuck with me over the years and loved my work. It is a "Best of Jean Rollin", full of quotations and homages. And although it was made in a very chaotic way, I think the result is one of my finest films.

LA GRIFFE D'HORUS (1990) was another TV project that remains in limbo.

One day, a guy named Gerard Dole called me up and asked for a meeting. He said he was a specialist on famous pulp-detective Harry Dickson and that he had also written a collection of related stories called THE NEW ADVENTURES OF HARRY DICKSON. He thought I was the only person in the world capable of bringing Harry Dickson to the screen. Of course, I was very proud of that, so I said "Ok, let´s give it a try".
We approached Channel 1, and they were interested, but they said they would have to buy the rights to the character first. The problem was, the original stories were written by Jean Ray, and the film rights are absolutely impossible to get; the more recent ones were written by anonymious writers, which makes the matter equally difficult.
We found a small publisher called C´ur Neuf who had the rights to some of the storys not written by Ray himself. Dole and I met with them to make a deal, and the very first thing out of their mouth was "Jean Rollin will never touch Harry Dickson as long as we live!" They HATED me- REALLY (laughs)! Dole was furious, of course, but he said he would write an original Harry Dickson story and we could film it on video, so he wrote the story of GRIFFE D´HORUS. I wrote a 26 minute TV script and we tried to make an arrangement, maybe presenting the character under a different name because of this legal problem, but it didn´t work out. We only shot about two minutes of it, just a screen test to see whether we managed to create the right atmosphere.
There was this guy, Jean-Michel Nicollet, and he was obsessed with Harry Dickson. He did the cover photography of some of the book-reprints and he photographed himself in the adequate outfit, so we decided to use him for GRIFFE D´HORUS. We shot it in one afternoon and everybody envolved was so pleased with the result that Dole said he was willing to make an entire feature film that way. However, the project is dead, unless we decided to do it just for fun, an amateur film shot on video with some friends.

You were really on the verge of abandoning the cinema during this period?

I was very depressed and frustrated. I really wanted to abandon directing , altogether. It was impossible to raise money for films, nobody cared, I seemed to be on a TV black list because I couldn´t get work at any of the channels. That´s when I decided to focus more on writing and I turned a lot of my screenplays, which I couldn´t produce as films, into novels. It helped me a lot, because I was finally able to do what I wanted once again, without any financinal limitations at all. I had a screenplay called BESTIALITÉ, which, at one point, was supposed to be made as an co-production with Russia, but once again, it turned out to be just another waste of time. It was a story I wrote for Brigitte Lahaie and Yoko. It involved an old Ambassador who returns from India and brings with him a strange animal, some sort of wolf. His daughter, played by Brigitte, developes a very special relationship with the beast until, one night, the beast transforms into a beautiful, exotic woman and they become more than friends. There is also some sort of initiation where Brigitte turns into a wolf. At the end both are killed by the Ambassador.
Then there was a project called ENFER PRIVÉ (Private Hell), again written for Brigitte and Yoko. This time she was supposed to play an aristocratic woman discovering a young woman living like a wild animal on the beach. She takes her home, but only to arrange a haunting like in THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME. Rene Chateu wanted to produce it- he was living with Brigitte at that time- but he wanted to include porn inserts shot by another director, with different actors, afterwards. I declined and eventually turned into a novel.

You eventually returned to directing with KILLING CAR (1993), which took two years to complete.

After we finished shooting, I became seriously ill, and everything stopped for a couple of months. I did the editing when I recovered. We did that on video, so no usable print or negative of KILLING CAR exists. It was made for TV and video, but I like it. It´s quite different from my other films. It´s a thriller, a revenge story of a woman hunting down numerous people who did something awful in her past. I know that it´s no masterpiece, but I think it is quite good considering the budget we had. I mean, we made it in 10 days. It cost only $ 100,000 and was shot in 16 mm, so it really is a small film. I wrote it for the leading actrss, Tiki Tsang, because I liked her so much. I wanted to do something with her.

In 1994, you wrote the screenplay for another porn film: LE PARFUM DE MATHILDE ("The Scent of Mathilde").

When Michele Ricaud, the most popular French porn director of recent years, died, every other porn director tried to take his place. A producer named Marc Dorcel called me up and asked whether I might be interested. I can tell you that I also co-directed this film, though only Dorcel is credited. As you can imagine, that´s something I´m not too sad about. Dorcel said he wanted me because he wanted somebody with a different approach. He wanted to come up with something unique after Ricaud´s death- a porn film with a story, with meaning, and he thought, the fantastic might be a good possibility. During that project, I realized how much that business had changed in all those years. The resulting film is just a typical porno, not a good film at all.

How would you explain the sudden increase of interest in your films? Only two years ago, as you say, hardly anybody gave a damn.

Honestly, I´m completely surprised about all that. My films will ber re-released on video in France and Belgium very soon, I have sold six of them to Redemption in England, and Video Search in Miami has bought some rights for the States. I don´t know what happened to bring this about, but I´m certainly very happy about it. Maybe it´s because of the return of the classical film monster. Maybe it´s because people getting tired of the new American genre films. I don´t go to the cinema very often anymore. I saw MARY SHELLEY´S FRANKENSTEIN, by Kenneth Branagh; I didn´t like it very much. I certainly saw BRAM STOKER´S DRACULA by Coppola- not a good film at all; it just doesn´t work for one second. There is no real imagination. It´s the work of a cinematogapher and a set designer. Where is the CREATOR in this film? Of course, it is very polished, but it cost $ 50,000,000 so that is the least one can expect!
Those of us who have a special interest in the fantastic cinema want films which have character, which are different. Films which managed to preserve some culture. I think this may be the reason for my second spring. A lot of people have been telling me about a new Italian film by Michele Soavi, called DELLAMORTE DELLAMORE. They are all crazy about it, praising it beyond belif, so I am VERY curious to see that one. But I feel that the genre is about to die, as is cinema in general. The films being made today have nothing to do with my understanding of cinema.

Let's talk about your first horror film in many years, LES DEUX ORPHELINES VAMPIRES (1995). The title makes an ironic reference to the classic French novel LES DEUX ORPHELINES by Adolphe D'Ennery, which was filmed by Ricardo Freda in 1966. A lot of people were eagerly anticipating your return to vampire cinema.

My recent increase in popularity has put me in a very favorable position. I am the producer, which means, I have the complete creative control, and I will have quite a good budget- about 3,000,000 FRancs. The money comes from a company which needs to invest because of tax reasons, and my novel (on which the film is based) also helped a lot, because they know there will be an English edition sooner or later. We start filming in June, four days in New York and three weeks here in Paris. I added some very visual sequences in the screenplay and I´m sure it will turn out to be a very nice film. I have the chance to work with an exceptionally good director of photography, Norbert Marfaing-Sintes, who lit the last two films by Duccio Tessari here in France, as well as many other feature films and commercials.
When we were shooting PERDUES DANS NEW YORK, we were lacking some scenes and Monteillet was not available. Norbert did about nine short films with Natalie Perrey, who played one of the leading parts in PERDUES..., so she just called him and he came to help us out. That´s when we first met, so it is my way of saying "Thank you for this favour".
The story of LES DEUX... involves two little blind orphans. They can only see at night because they are vampires and the film tells of their adventures. They meet strange creatures, a winged vampire lady, a wolf. There will be no nudity, but—rest assured—there will be some beautiful graveyard scenes, and it´s very poetic and full of beautiful dialogue. Brigitte Lahaie will star in it, as well as Tina Aumont, who plays "The Ghoul". The two orphans will be played by Alexandra Pic and Isabelle Teboul, two young actresses who have never worked in films before. I found them through a newspaper ad and they are absolutely gorgeous, as you will see.
I´m quite happy at the moment. Things couldn´t be going better for me and my two little vampire orphans. And who knows? Maybe someday I can go back to the other books I wrote, which started out as screenplays, and turn them into the films I originally intended...

Interview by Peter Blumenstock—Paris, May 1995.
Translation by Tim Lucas.

FILMOGRAPHY

(as director or actor, excluding amateur films)

Alternative titles are given with reference to the country; e. g. G = Germany
P = Production // Dp = Director of Photography // E = Editor // M = Music //
Asst. d = Asistant Director

LES AMOURS JAUNES
France 1958
Preproduction Title: Poète Contumace
Director: Jean Rollin // **Sc:** Claude Martin // **Cast:** Jean Denisse, Guy Huiban, Doninique Vidal.
Short-film, b/w, 12 minutes

CIEL DE CUIVRE
France 1959

UN CHEVAL POUR DEUX
France 1962
Director: Jean-Marc Thibault // **Asst. director:** Jean Rollin // **Cast:** Roger Pierre, Jean-Marc Thibault.

L'ITINÉRAIRE MARIN
France 1963
Director: Jean Rollin // **Sc:** Jean Rollin, **dialogues:** Marguerite Duars & Gérard Jarlot // **Cast:** René-Jean Chauffard, Michel Lagrange, Gaston Modot, Anee Tonietti, Jean-Loup Philippe
Feature film, never completed.

LE PAYS LOIN
France 1965
Director: Jean Rollin // **Cast:** Julie, Pascal Fardoulis, Bernard Papineau, Ben Zimet.
Short film, b/w, 17 minutes.

VIVRE EN ESPAGNE
Director: Jean Rollin
short documentary about the Spanish resitance against General Franco

LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE (La Reine des Vampires)
France 1968
UK: The Rape of the Vampire
Director: Jean Rollin // **P:** Sam Selsky, Films ABC // **Sc:** Jean Rollin // **Dp:** Guy Leblond, Antoine Harispe // **Sets:** Alain-Yves Beaujoue // **E:** Jean-Denis Bonan, Mireille Abramovici // **Sound:** Jean-François Chevalier // **M:** Yvon Géraud, François Tusques. // **Cast:** Bernard Letrou, Solange Pradel, Ursule Pauly, Nicole Romain, Catherine Devil, Jacqueline Sieger, Ariane Sapriel, Éric Yan, Marquis Polho, Alain Beaujour, Olivier Martin, Barbara Girard, Annie Merlin, Doc Moyle, Marc Pauly, Philippe Druillet, Jean Rollin.

LA VAMPIRE NUE
France 1969
UK: The Nude Vampire // **G:** Die nackten Vampire, Das Lustschloß der grausamen Frauen // **I:** La Vampira Nuda
Director: Jean Rollin // **P:** Sam Selsky, Les Films ABC // **Sc:** Jean Rollin, **dialogues:** Jean Rollin, Serge Moati // **Dp:** Jean-Jacques Renon // **Sets & Costumes:** Jio Berk // **M:** Yvon Géraud, François Tusques // **Cast:** Christine François, Olivier Martin, Maruice Lemaitre, Ly Letrong, Bernard Musson, Cathy Tricot = Catherine Castel, Pony Tricot = Marie-Pierre Castel, Michel Delahaye, Pascal Fardoulis, Paul Bisciglia, Nicole Isimat, René Chauffard, Natalie Perrey.

LE FRISSON DES VAMPIRES
France 1970
G: Sexualterror der entfesselten Vampire
Director: Jean Rollin // **P:** Les Filmes Modernes // **Sc:** Jean Rollin // **Dp:** Jean-Jacques Renon // **E:** Olivier Grégoire // **M:** Acanthus // **Sets:** Michel Delesalle // **Sound:** J. P. Louhblier // **Cast:** Sandra Julien, Jean-Marie Durand, Michel Delahaye, Jacques Robiolles, Marie-Piere Castel, Kuelan Herca, Dominique.

REQUIEM POUR UN VAMPIRE
France 1971
UK: Requiem for a Vampire // **Shooting Title:** Vierges et Vampires.
Director: Jean Rollin // **P:** Sam Selsky, Les Films ABC // **Sc:** Jean Rollin // **Dp:** Renan Polles, **camera:** Gareth // **E:** Michel Patient // **M:** Pierre Raph // **Make-up:** Carole Fidler // **Sound:** Gérard Tilly // **Production Director:** Lionel Wallmann // **Cast:** Marie-Pierre Castel, Mireille Dargent, Philippe Gasté, Doninique, Louise Dhour, Michel Delessalle, Paul Bisciglia, Michel François, Antoine Mausin, Dominique Toussaint, Jean-Noël Delamarre.

LA ROSE DE FER
France 1972
Export Title: The Crystal Rose, The Night of the Cemetery // **Shooting Titles:** Le Cimetière de la Nuit, La Nuit du Cimetière.
Director: Jean Rollin // **P:** Sam Selsky, Pierre Letovsky for Les Films ABC // **Sc:** Jean Rollin // **Dp:** Jean-Jacques Renon // **E:** Michel Patient // **M:** Pierre Raph // **Sound:** Gille Aubry // **Cast:** Françoise Pascal, Pierre Dupont = Hugues Quester, Mireille Dargent, Natalie Perrey, Jean Rollin.

JEUNES FILLES IMPUDIQUES
France 1973
Director: Michel Gentil = Jean Rollin // **P:** Avia Films, Les Films ABC // **Sc:** Jean Rollin // **Cast:** Joëlöle Cœur, Gilda Arancio, Marie-Hélène Regne, Willy Braque, François Brincourt.

LES DEMONIAQUES
France/Belgium 1973
Shooting Titles: Les Diablesses, Deux Vierges pour Satan
Director: Jean Rollin // **P:** Lionel Wallman for Nordia Films // **Sc:** Jean Rollin // **Dp:** Jean-Jacques Renon // **E:** Michel Patient // **M:** Pierre Raph // **Sets:** Jio Berk // **Cast:** Joëlle Cœur, Lieva Lonne, Patricia Hermenier, John Rico, Willy Braque, Paul Bisciglia, Louse Dhour, Aves Collignon, Mécha Zivomir, Ben Zimet, Isabelle Copejeans, Mireille Dargent, Jean Rollin, Jean-Jacques Renon.

TOUT LE MONDE IL EN A DEUX (Bacchanales Sexuelles)
France 1974
Director: Michel Gentil = Jean Rollin // **P:** Les Films ABC, Nordia Films // **Sc:** Jean Rollin // **Dp:** Claude Becognée // **M:** Rex Hilton // **Cast:** Joëlle Cœur, Marie-France Morel, Annie Briand = Annie Belle, Britt Anders = Brigitte De Borghers, Willy Braque.

LEVRES DE SANG
France 1974
Shooting Title: Jennifer
Director: Jean Rollin // **P:** Off Production, Scorpion 5, Nordia Film, **Production Representative:** Jean-Marc Ghanassia // **Sc:** Jean Rollin, **Adaptation:** Jean-Loup Philippe, Jean Rollin // **Dp:** Jean-François Robin // **E:** Olivier Grégoire // **M:** Didier William Lepauw // **Sets:** Alain Pitrel // **Make-up:** Éric Pierre // **Sound:** Gérard Tilly // **Cast:** Jean-Loup Philippe // Annie Briand = Annie Belle, Natalie Perrey, Willy Braque, Paul Bisciglia, Martine Grimaud, Cathy Castel, Pony Castel, Hélène Maguin, Anita Berglund, Serge Rollin, Jean Rollin, Sylvia bourdon, Claudine Becarie, Julien Etchevery, Béatrice Harnois, Mireille Dargent.
Note: SUCE-MOI, VAMPIRE, according to Rollin directed by an unknown French director, made use of numerous scenes, cast and crew members from LEVRES DE SANG, including Lionel Wallmann and Rollin himself.

PHANTASMES
France 1975
Alt. Fr: Phantasmes Pornographiques, Les Fantasmes d'Isabelle // **USA:** The Seduction of Amy // D: Sexfantasien, Geile Stories, Geile Notzucht.
Director: Jean Rollin // **P:** André Samarq, Jean-Paul for Impex Films, Les Films ABC // **Sc:** Jean Rollin // **Dp:** Allinh // **E:** Michel Patient // **M:** Didier William Lepauw // **Make-up:** Catherine Castel // **Cast:** Mylène d'Antès, Jean-Louis Vattier, Marlène Myller, Manuella Marino, Marie-Pierre Castel, Catherine Castel, Monica Swinn, Jean-Pierre Bouyxou, Jean Rollin, Évelyne Thomas, Corinne Lemoine, Claudia Zante, Greg Masters, Cyril Val, Alban Ceray, Sarah Toga.

DOUCES PÉNÉTRATIONS
France 1975
Director: Michel Gentil = Jean Rollin // **Sc:** Michel Gentil // **Dp:** Oscar Lapin // **M:** Didier William Lepauw // **Asst. d:** Jean-Pierre Bouyxou // **Make-up:** Catherine Castel // **Cast:** Tanya Bussellier, Martine Grimaud, Eva Khris, Eva Kwang, Catherine & Marie-Pierre Castel, Jocelyne Clairs, Charlie Schreiner, John Oury, François Gharsi, Victor Samama.

LA COMTESSE IXE
France 1976
Alt. Title: Suœurs Chaudes
Director: Michel Gentil = Jean Rollin // **Sc:** Michel Gentil // **M:** Didier William Lepauw // **Asst d:** Jean-Pierre Bouyxou // **Make-up:** Cathy Tricot = Catherine Castel // **Cast:** Rachel Mhas, Jackie Dartois, Alban Ceray, Cyril Val, Catherine Castel, Karin = Karine Gambier, Sandrine Pernelle, Patrice Maranzzano, Antonia, Guy Royer, Chris Martin.

HARD PÉNETRATION
France 1976
Director: Michel Gentil = Jean Rollin // **Sc:** Michel Gentil // **Dp:** Georgy Fromentin, Bernard Dechet // **E:** Bernard Honnore // **M:** Michel Roy.
Cast: Catherine Castel, Alban Ceray, Alain Richard, Jacques Marbœuf.

VIBRATIONS SEXUELLES
France 1976
Director: Michel Gentil = Jean Rollin // **Cast:** Brigitte Lahaie, Alban Ceray, Maude Carolle, Catherine Castel, Rachel Mhas.

APOTHEOSE PORNO
France 1976
G: Wünsche und Perversionen
Director: Michel Gand = Jean Rollin (?) // **Dp:** Raffael Josse // **E:** Clarisse Dearing // **Asst. d:** Jean-Pierre = Jean-Pierre Bouyxou (?) // **Cast:** Christine Martin, Véronique Aubert, Catherine Castel, Virginie Swyt, Jean-Louis Vattier, Cyril Val, Jacques Marbœuf.

SAUTE-MOI DESSUS
France 1977
Director: Michel Gentil = Jean Rollin // **M:** Paul Piot, Michael Roy // **Cast:** Miriam Watteau, Patrick Lyonnet, Marilyn Chanaud, Jean-Paul Bride, Thérèse Barthel.

LÉVRES ENTROUVERTES
France 1977
Alt. Title: Monque-Lévres Entrouvertes
Director: Michel Gentil = Jean Rollin // **M:** Gary Sandeur // **Cast:** Samanta, Charlie Schreiner, Cyril Val, Miriam Watteau, Marilyne, Mica, Gérard Delair, Guida Hernandez, Patrick Béchard.

POSITIONS DANOISES
France 1977
Director: Michel Gentil = Jean Rollin // **M:** Jean-Pierre Pouret, Dany Darras // **Cast:** Willy Braque, Lisa Stophenberg, Jean-Claude Bertin, Marilyne, Charlie Schreiner, Maude Carolle, Gérard de Laire, Mika.

DISCOSEX
France 1977
Director: Michel Gentil = Jean Rollin.

LE TROIS TROUS
France 1978
G: Jeannette & Catherine
Director: Robert Xavier = Jean-Pierre Bouyxou (?) // **Dp:** Georges Julien.
Cast: Cathy Stewart, Jenny Feeling, Véronique Smith, Diane Dubois, Elsa Pime, Cyril Val, Divan Ledoux, Michel Gentil = Jean Rollin, Jean-Pierre Bouyxou.

LE RUÉE VERS L'ORGASME
France 1978
Alt. Title: Enfilez-Moi Vite... Vite, Je Mouille
Director: Jean-Pierre Bouyxou // **P:** Les Films ABC // **Sc:** Jean-Pierre Bouyxou // **Dp:** Georges Julien // **M:** Guy Skornik // **Cast:** Cathy Stewart, Jenny Feeling, Veronika Smith, Cyril Val, Dominique Aveline, Elsa Pime, Divan Ledoux, Michel Gentil = Jean Rollin, Jean-Pierre Bouyxou.

PULSIONS SECRETES
France 1978
Director: Robert Xavier // **Dp:** Georges Julien // **Cast:** Barbara Moose, Jean-Pierre Bouyxou, Cyril Val, Dominique Aveline, Diane Dubois, Cathy Stewart, Jacques Gatteau, Jenny Feeling, Valerie Martin, Jean Rollin.

LES RAISINS DE LA MORT
France 1978
Shooting Title: Pesticide // **Export:** Grapes of Death // **G:** Die Foltermühle der gefangenen Frauen, Zombies-geschändete Frauen.
Director: Jean Rollin // **P:** Rush Production, Les Films ABC, Off Production // **Sc:** Jean Rollin, Jean-Pierre Bouyxou // **Dp:** Claude Bécogné // **E:** Christian Stolanovich, Doninique Saint-Cyr // **M:** Philippe Sissmann // **Production Director:** Christian Rush // **Production Representative:** Claude Guedj // **FX:** Alfredo Tibéri, Raphaël Maronjiu, Yannick Josse. // **Cast:** Marie-Georges Pascal, Félix Marten, Serge Marquant, Mirella Rancelot, Patrice Valota, Patricia Certier, Michel Herval, Brigitte Lahaie, Paul Bisciglia, Olivier Rollin, François Pascal, Évelyne Thomas, Jean-Pierre Bouyxou, Jean Rollin.

FASCINATION
France 1979
Director: Jean Rollin // **P:** Joël de Lara, Les Films ABC, Comex Production // **Sc:** Jean Rollin // **Dp:** Georges Fromentin // **E:** Dominique Saint-Cyr // **M:** Philippe d'Aram // **Sound:** Claude Panier // **Cast:** Franka Maï, Brigitte Lahaie, Jean-Marie Lemaire, Fanny Magier, Évelyne Thomas, Myriam Watteau, Alain Plumey, Sophie Noël, Muriel Montosse, Agnès Bert, Jacques Marboeuf.

PÉNÉTRATIONS VICIEUSES
France 1979
Director: Michel Gentil = Jean Rollin // **Dp:** PierreFattori, Jean Fattori // **M:** Sonorinter // **Cast:** Henri Lamotte, Orson Rosebud, Cyril Val, Cathy Stewart, Ingrid, Paulette Durond.

INTRODUCTIONS PERVERSES
France 1979
Director: Michel Gentil = Jean Rollin // **Dp:** Pierre Fattori // **M:** Sonorinter.
Cast: Cyril Val, Valerie Martin, Dominique Aveline, Cathy Stewart, Sophie Dufflot.

LA NUIT DES TRAQUÉES
France 1980
Director: Jean Rollin // **P:** Impex Films, Jacques Roitfeld // **Sc:** Jean Rollin // **Dp:** Jean-Claude Couty // **E:** Gilbert Kikoïne // **M:** Philippe Brigeaud.
Cast: Brigitte Lahaie, alain Duclos, Doninique Journet, Bernard Papineau, Rachel Minas, Vincent Garder, Jean Rollin, Lionel Wallman.

CLINIQUE POUR SOINS TRÈS SPÉCIAUX
France 1980
G: Operation Steifeprüfung
Director: John Love = Alain Payet // **Dp:** Roger Fellous // **Cast:** Dominque Saint Clair aka Barbara Moose, Cyril Val, Hubert Geral, Sophie Dufflot, Elodie Delage, Desir Bastarreaud, Elsa Pime, Sia Lang, Jean Rollin.

LE LAC DES MORTS-VIVANTS
France/Spain 1980
USA, G, Export: Zombie Lake
Director: J. A. Lazer = Jean Rollin // **P:** Eurociné, J.E. Film // **M:** Daniel White // **Cast:** Howard Vernon, Pierre Escourrou, Anthony Mayans = Antonio Mayans, Nadine Pascal, Burt Altman, Anouchka, Alain Petit.

No Title
France ca. 1980
Director: Jean Rollin // **P:** Eurociné
Short zombie scenes for other Eurociné productions; found in some versions of Jess Franco's 1970 "Une Vierge chez les Morts Vivants/A Virgin Among the Living Dead".

LES ÉCHAPPÉES (Les Paumees du Petit Matin)
France1981
Shooting Title: Les Meurtrières
Director: Jean Rollin // **P:** Les Films ABC, Impex Films // **Sc:** Jean Rollin, **dialogues:** Jacques Ralf // **Dp:** Claude Bécogné // **M:** Philippe d'Aram (Edition: CAM) // **Continuity:** Natalie Perrey // **Assistant D:** Gaspard Chavagnac // **Cast:** Laurence Dubas, Christiane Coppé, Marianne Valiot, Patrick Perrot, Louise Dhour, Jean-Louis fortuit, Patricia Mercurol, Claude Leveque, Brigitte Lahaie, Claude Bécogné, Natalie Perrey.

LA MORTE VIVANTE
France 1982
E, Export: The Living Dead Girl // **G:** Lady Dracula
Director: Jean Rollin // **P:** Les Films ABC, Films, Films du Yaka, Sam Selsky // **Sc:** Jean Rollin // **Dp:** Max Monteillet, **dialogues:** Jacques Ralf // **E:** Janette Kronegger // **M:** Philippe d'Aram // FX: Benoit Lestang
Cast: Marina Pierro, Françoise Blanchard, Mike Marshall, Carina Barone, Fanny Magier, Patricia Besnard-Rousseau, Sam Selsky.

LES TROTTOIRS DE BANGKOK (Bangkok Interdit)
France 1983
G: Kill Street
Director: Jean Rollin // **P:** Impex Films, Les Films ABC // **Sc:** Jean Rollin, Jean-Claude Benhamou // **Dp:** Claude Becognée // **E:** Janette Kronegger // **M:** Georges Lartigau // **Cast:** Yoko, Françoise Blanchard, Brigitte Borghese, André-Richard Volniévy, Antonina Laurent, Chokie, Gérard Landry, Jean-Paul Bride, Jean-Pierre Bouyxou, Jean-Claude Benhamou, Olivier Rollin

NE PRENDS PAS LES POULETS POUR DES PIGEONS
France 1985
Director: Michel Gentil = Jean Rollin, Jean-Claude Benhamou
P: Films de l'Eau Vive, Les Films ABC // **Sc:** Jean-Claude Benhamou // **Dp:** Quinto Albicocco // **E:** Janette Kronegger // **M:** Alex Perdigon, Jean-Claude Benhamou // **Cast:** Jean-Claude Benhamou, Jean-Marie Vauclin, Popeck, Michel Galabru, Gérard Landry, René Tramoni, Brigitte Borghese, Christian Forges, Cecile Laligan.

EMANUELLE 6
France 1988
Director: Bruno Zincone, Jean Rollin (uncredited) // **P:** ASP, (Alain Siritzky) // **Sc:** Jean Rollin // **Dp:** Max Monteillet // **M:** Olivier Day.

CHASING BARBARA
France 1990
Director: Jean Rollin // **P:** Eurociné.
Short scenes for use in old Eurociné productions.

PERDUES DANS NEW YORK
France 1991
G, USA: Lost in New York
Director: Jean Rollin
P: Mars International Production, Les Films ABC, Francam Inter Service Corp. // **Sc:** Jean Rollin // **Dp:** Max Monteillet // **E:** Janette Kronegger // **M:** Philippe d'Aram // **Cast:** Catherine Herengt, Catherine Lesret, Funny & Adeline Abitbol, Natalie Perrey, Marie Laurence, Sophie Maret, Catherine Rival, Mélissa.

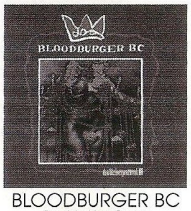
KILLING CAR
France 1993
Shooting Title: Femme Dangereuse
Director: Jean Rollin // **P:** Impex, Tanagra // **Sc:** Jean Rollin // **Dp:** Max Monteillet // **E:** Janette Kronegger // **M:** Philippe Brejean // **Cast:** Tiki Tsang, Fréderique Hayman, Jean-Jacques Lefeuvre, Karine Swanson, Jean-René Gossard, Jean-Pierre Bouyxou, Anissa Berkani-Rohmer, Maurice Rohmer.

LE PARFUM DE MATHILDE
France 1994
Directors: Marc Dorcel & Jean Rollin // **Sc:** Jean Rollin // **Dp:** Serge de Beaurivage // **E:** Norma Pouliopoulos, Marc Kramer // **M:** Marc Dorcel // **Organisation:** Jacques Michel // **Cast:** Draghixa, Julie Chanel, Christophe Clark, Maeva, Elodie, Simona Valli, Elisabeth Stone, Eric Weiss, Richard Langin, David Perry, Thomas Smith.

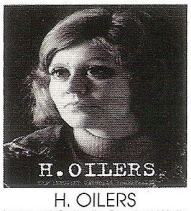
LES DEUX ORPHELINES VAMPIRES
France 1995
Export: The Two Vampire Orphans
Director: Jean Rollin // **P:** Les Films ABC, Lincoln Publishing, Sam Selsky, Francam Inter Service Corp. // **Sc:** Jean Rollin, based on his novel of the samename // **Dp:** Norbert Marfaing-Sintes // **E:** Natalie Perrey // **M:** Philippe d'Aram, Ars Antigua // **Director of Production:** Lionel Wallmann // **Make-up:** Maryvonne Harrouet // **Sound:** Francis Baldos // **FX:** Sylvain Montagne // **Cast:** Isabelle Teboul, Alexandra Pic, Natalie Perrey, Anne Duguël, Bernard Charnacé, Brigitte Lahaie, Tina Aumont, Nathalie Karsenty, Anissa Berkani-Rohmer, Véronique Djaouti, Nada, Raymond Audemard, Fréderique Haymann, Sandrine Thoquet, Mélanie Karalli, Michel Franck, Paulette Jauffre, Camille Delamarre, Marie-Laurence, Catherine Day, Karolina Wolfzram, Martin Snaric.

more crippled goods for crippled people

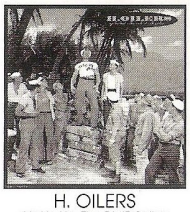
Crippled DICK HOT WAX !



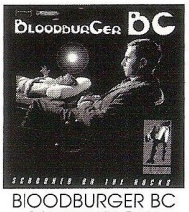
BLOODBURGER BC
Double Live Gonzo
7" DM 6,90



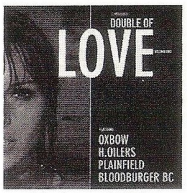
H. OILERS
Innocent Catholic Combat Waltz
CD: DM 25,– / LP: DM 16,–



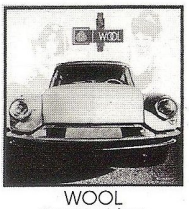
H. OILERS
Yo-Ho-Ho- The R'n'R Sailor
10": DM 12,90



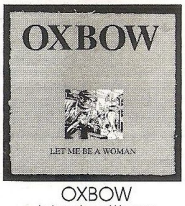
BLOODBURGER BC
Schooner on the Rocks
Mini CD: DM 13,90



Various Artists
Double of Love
(feat. Oxbow, H. Oilers, Plainfield)
Double 7": DM 12,90



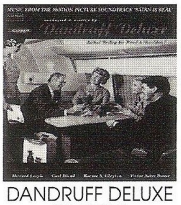
WOOL
Soundcheck Song
7": DM 7,90



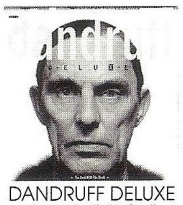
OXBOW
Let me be a Woman
CD: DM 25,– / LP: DM 16,–

OXBOW
Serenade in Red
CD / Double LP: DM 25,–

OXBOW
Insylum / The Stabbing Hand
Lim. 10" Pict. Disc: DM 12,90

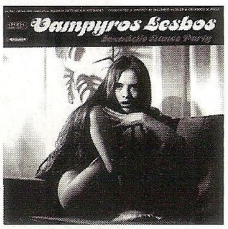


DANDRUFF DELUXE
Satan is Real
7": DM 7,90

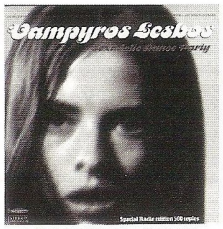


DANDRUFF DELUXE
The Deal with the Devil
CD / LP: DM 25,–

FUNKI PORCINI
Funki Porcini vs. Jerry Van Rooyen
Remix of AT 250 MILES PER HOUR
12" : DM 12,–



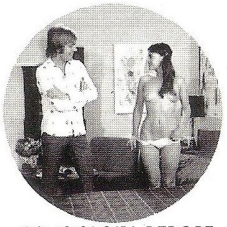
VAMPYROS LESBOS
Hübler & Schwab
JESS FRANCO'S HORROTICA CLASSIC
CD: DM 20,– / LP: DM 25,–
not to be sold in the U.S.



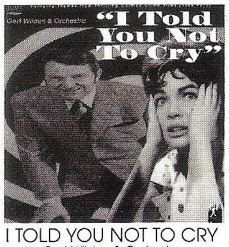
VAMPYROS LESBOS
Hübler & Schwab
RADIO EDITION
7": DM 7,90
not to be sold in the U.S.

VAMPYROS LESBOS
Hübler & Schwab
OUTTAKES & ALREADY KNOWN STUFF
LIM. LP PICTURE DISC: DM 25,–
not to be sold in the U.S.

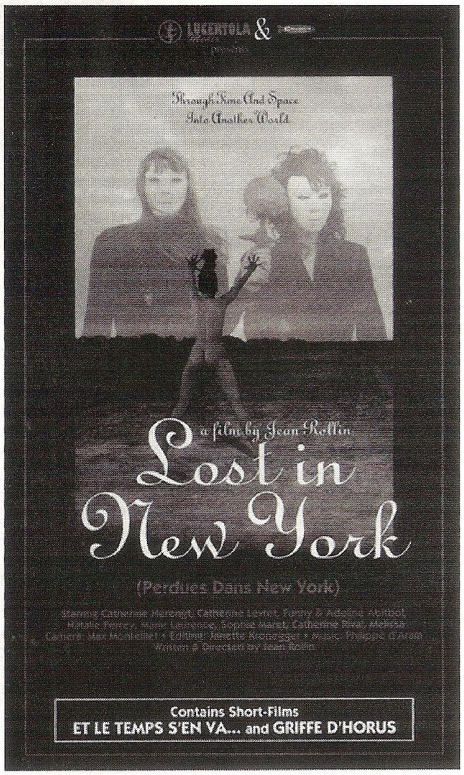
SCHOOLGIRL REPORT
Gert Wilden & Orchestra
GERMAN EROTIC SCORES FROM THE 70S.
CD / LP: DM 25,–



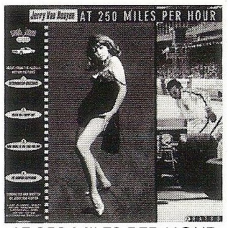
SCHOOLGIRL REPORT
Gert Wilden & Orchestra
OUTTAKES & ALREADY KNOWN STUFF
LIM. LP PICTUREDISC: DM 25,–



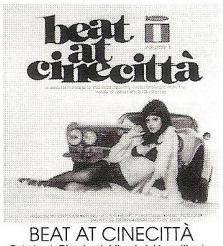
I TOLD YOU NOT TO CRY
Gert Wilden & Orchestra
SWINGING GERMAN CRIME FILM THEMES
CD / LP: DM 25,–



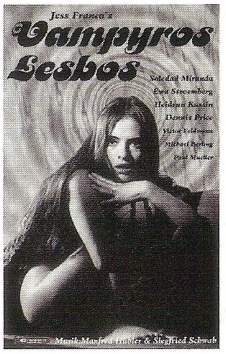
LOST IN NEW YORK / PERDUES DAN NEW YORK
Jean Rollin's dreamy journey through time, space, the world of literature, film and the fantastique.
FRENCH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES! CONTAINS UNRELEASED SHORT FILMS:
VHS, PAL, COLOR: DM 30,–



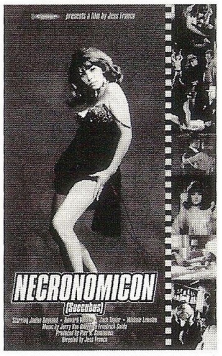
AT 250 MILES PER HOUR
Jerry Van Rooyen
BRASS JAZZ FROM "NECRONOMICON", "THE VAMPIRE HAPPENING" ETC.
CD / LP: DM 25,–



BEAT AT CINECITTÀ
Ortolani, Piccioni, Nicolai, Usuelli, etc.
SWINGING PASTA SOUNDS ALL DENTE
CD / LP: DM 25,–



VAMPYROS LESBOS
Directed by Jess Franco, Uncut, Letterboxed
VHS, PAL, COLOR: DM 30,–



NECRONOMICON / SUCCUBUS
Directed by Jess Franco, Letterboxed, incl. Trailer
VHS, PAL, COLOR: DM 35,–

Join the Fun!

Orders from European Countries:

C.O.D.(Nachnahme) only in Germany. Elsewhere: We deliver only against payment upfront. Payment via EURO-Cheque, by Int. Money Order or by VISA/MASTER/EURO-Card. Just give us the number and expiration date of your Card. Postage within Europe is DM 13,–. If the invoice amount is higher than DM 350,– postage is free!

Orders from Overseas Countries:

As above.
Air Mail Postage rates are:
1 CD DM 16, 2-3 CDs DM 24,–, 4-6 CDs DM 32,–
1-2 LPs DM 32, 3-4 LPs DM 40,–
Surface Mail (about 8-10 weeks!) DM 20,–

For ordering, questions or a more detailed catalogue incl. T-Shirts, more CDs and other goods please write or e-mail to:

Crippled Dick Hot Wax
P.O. Box 3864
78027 VS-Schwenningen / Germany
fax: 07720-22435
e-mail: crippled@gbc.net

EUROCARD MasterCard VISA

Original Motion Picture Soundtrack

Les Deux Orphelines Vampires

The Two Vampire Orphans

music by Philippe d'Aram & Ars Antiqua

1. Blue Visions (Les Orphelines Vampires) 2. Liberation
3. Cemetery Games 4. Iona's Death 5. Phantoms in New York
6. A New Home with Dr. Dennery 7. Goodbye "Father" 8. Circus
9. Statues of Blood 10. Free All Night Long
11. Land of the Dead 12. Land of the Dead 2 13. Reis Glorios *
14. Dr. Dennery's Return 15. "J'ai aî gagné"
16. The Door is Open 17. Smoking Girls 18. Bloodlust
19. Together 20. The Game is Over (End Titles)

Music composed, arranged and performed by Philippe d'Aram
* "Reis Glorios" performed by Ars Antiqua de Paris,
written by Guiraut de Borneilh

Music published by Lucertola Media with exception of *;
used with kind permission from Ars Antiqua de Paris

Digital remastering by Fir Suidema

Dedicated to Jean

JEAN ROLLIN

Virgins & Vampires

The First Photo Book dedicated to the French Master of Erotic *Frissons*: Jean Rollin

One's first encounter with the cinema of Jean Rollin is in most cas memorable experience. You either love or hate what you see; are bewitc or bewildered, fascinated or utterly irritated. Some people compare films to the paintings of Max Ernst or Clouvis Trouille, and his talent writer to Stirner, Marx and Boby Lapointe.
While refined eroticism and fetish-imagery are a steady companion t œuvre, it is his unique worldview that shines through between the fra of pulp-inspired vampire and horror fables. It's the mixture of ingredi that define the "Rollinade," a term invented by French critics to desc his style in the early 70s. His love for the aesthetics and cheesy cliffhar mentality of American pulp culture, blending the profound and eth tradition of the French fantastique with an almost avantgarde-like vi style that has no comparison.
Rollin's films are extremely slow, referring to sets and objects as if they w sculptures that deserve the utmost attention of the camera in orde transform them into a landscape of another planet. Railroads, woods, abandoned chateaus and cemeteries are put on celluloid as if they w a lost paradise of the dead, full of romanticism and whispers telling of l forgotten stories.

Essays by Jean Rollin on his films.

Contains more than 650 rare color & b/w photos, taken from the private archive of Rollin. Most of them never before published.

Interview with Jean Rollin.

Contains exclusive full-length CD with the original soundtrack of "The Two Vampire Orphans", Rollin's most recent film. Music by Philippe d'Aram & Ars Antigua

156 pages, 72 pages full color.

ISBN 3-9805820-0

7 18750 92920

crippled library

A Division of:

Crippled Dick Hot Wax • P. O. Box 3864 • 78027 VS-Schwenningen • Germany • fax: 07720-22435 • e-mail: crippled@abo